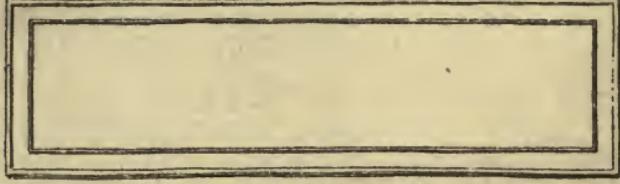
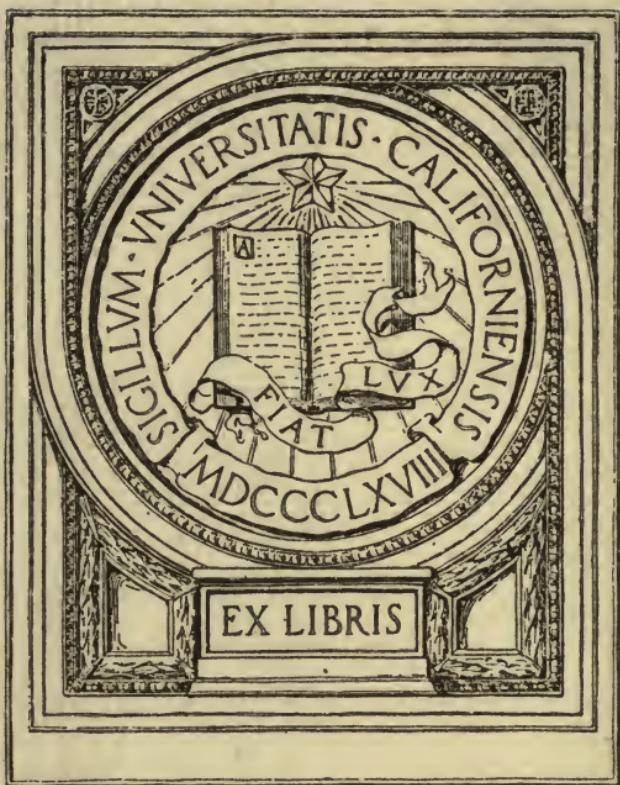


THE
GREAT HISTORIANS

A. JORDAN, M. A.



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THE GREAT HISTORIANS
OF ANCIENT AND MODERN TIMES



THE GREAT HISTORIANS OF ANCIENT & MODERN TIMES

THEIR GENIUS, STYLE, SURROUNDINGS, AND
LITERARY ACHIEVEMENTS

BY THE REV.

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PREFACE.

WE cannot regard it only as a wonder, yet unsolved, how it came to pass that a simple nation like the early Greeks could have acquired a knowledge of letters so advanced that it could produce an historian of such merit as Herodotus, while all the rest of the world was in a state of barbarism.

Halicarnassus, which gave birth to Herodotus, was once the residence of the Sovereigns of Caria, a maritime city, and hence favourably situated for receiving all the civilisation of the Phœnicians.

Hesiod and Homer had existed centuries before (967-927 B.C.), another amazing puzzle!—and 350 years previous to Homer—still more wonderful—Pherecydes of Scyros, and Cadmus of Miletus, were prose writers. Yet we are to believe the Phœnicians taught the Greeks letters about 800 B.C. Could the Jewish Nation, or the Persian, have taught them their method of writing? or did they get it from the Egyptians? They were clever enough to adapt or even to invent. Thucydides

presents us with a contrast, a style, the perfection of sententious brevity, lively and energetic. Xenophon follows with a flowing pen, simple and unadorned, natural, free from affectation.

Greece, in her decline, produced Polybius, Dionysius, and Plutarch.

Then the genius of Greece is learnt and copied by her conquerors, and Rome produced Livy and Cæsar. Europe then becomes Latinized until it is swamped in the barbarous flood of illiterate and ignorant races of the North. One slight gleam peeps forth in the persons of St. Denis, St. Hilary, and St. Germain, and then we have the honour of pointing to the venerable Bede, and his pupil Alcuin, who introduced to Charlemagne the German Egihard, who gave us the History of Charlemagne and the Annals of the Franks. And then comes a blank again, in England as well as on the Continent. For the revival of literature in Alfred the Great's reign which coincides with Charlemagne, was extinguished in the barbarous struggle which followed, and not until the reign of Henry Rufus do we find any writers of note. From that time again, there is a dearth, and not until the reign of Queen Elizabeth do we find writers of great eminence. Thence, both in England and France, historians are to be found—good, bad, and

indifferent. When we come to our own times, histories for scholastic use are abundant, of whom the most noticeable is Green's.

The following is a list of books to which I am indebted for assistance: Dr. Mahaffy's "History of Classical Greek Literature," Muller's "History of Greek Literature," Simcox's "History of Latin Literature," Johnes' "Froissart's Chronicles," and Morison's "English Men of Letters."

ALBERT JORDAN.

LLANBADARN RECTORY,

April, 1914.

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UNITED STATES
CALIFORNIA

The Great Historians.

I.

HERODOTUS.

BORN 484 B.C.

THE modern historian has always at his command works of reference; he can examine and compare standard writings that have accumulated through a succession of ages of literature. Where there is any gap which is either too full of legendary fables, or altogether too silent, the history of the country is constantly unfolded by excavations and discoveries. For instance, the history of Great Britain is exceedingly vague in the early centuries of the Christian era, and yet discoveries that are constantly being made place before us in startling reality the luxurious homes, the splendid edifices that were the scenes of much gaiety, such as the almost complete baths of the Romans, or the tesselated pavements and other luxurious appendages of the Roman villas which are being constantly

brought to light by the excavator. These, of course, are interesting to us as containing evidence of our own part; but they fade in comparison with the marvellous discoveries made in modern times of Babylon, Crete, Ionia, and Italy, where the excavator brings to light the most striking evidence of a civilisation long before we have any historical notice of such a state of things existing. The historian can betake himself to our great libraries where he has access to almost every book that has survived the ages; and authentic records are equally at his service for reference and guidance.

But Herodotus got most of his details from personal evidence and hearsay, though he makes no display of the great extent of his travels; though he does not say that he saw such and such a thing, he uses words which are as conclusive as any statement. For instance, in Euterpe ii. 182, he describes "things as standing behind the doors." Or, as in Euterpe ii. 28, he was told something by a person in a particular place, or he uses words equally significant.

Herodotus seems as if ^{the Herod} he had seen Thebes and Karnak, and sailed up the Nile as far as the first cataract. Professor Sayce proves that he could never have ascended further than Taioum, and in other ways he has discredited him as an eye-witness,

as, for instance, his having mused among the ruins of Nineveh ; but the sterling worth of his narratives have saved him from the reproach of imposture. But, of course, Herodotus had historical books to refer to.

The nine books of Herodotus contain a great variety of matter, the unity of which is not perceived till the whole work has been thoroughly examined; but the subject of his history was conceived by the author both clearly and comprehensively. There was an Epos—the defeat of the Persians by the Greeks, as a master action—and Herodotus wielded all his knowledge of Egypt and the East in order to illuminate it. His object was to combine a general history of the Greeks and Barbarians with the history of the wars of the Greeks and Persians; accordingly, in execution of his main subject—the Epos—he traces the course of events from the time when the Lydian kingdom of Croesus fell before the arms of Cyrus, 546 B.C. (the founder of the Persian Monarchy), to the capture of Sestus, 478 B.C., an event which crowned the triumph of the Greeks over the Persians.

The great subject of his work, which is comprised within the space of sixty-eight years, no more than the ordinary term of human life, advanced with a regular progress and truly dramatic develop-

ment, from the first weak and divided efforts of the Greeks to resist Asiatic numbers, to their union as a nation and their final triumph in the memorable fights of Thermopylæ, Salamis, and Platæa. He attributes the racial hostility of the Persians and the Greeks to abduction of a Princess Io, daughter of Inachus, by some Phœnician merchants, and the Greeks retaliated by sailing down in a vessel of war to Colchis, and carrying off the king's daughter Medea.

The final overthrow of the Persians at Platæa, and here again we find the romance of a woman, who, when the Persians were overthrown by the Greeks, having decked herself and her attendant with much gold and in the richest attire, that she had alighted from her carriage and advanced towards the Lacedæmonians, and yielded herself to Pausanias, whom she observed to be directing all things. The description of the loot is also interesting. They found tents decked with gold and silver, and couches gilt, and plates and golden bowls and cups, and other drinking vessels. Pausanias made a proclamation that no one should touch the booty. These are instances of the liveliness of the narrative, which all through is of the greatest interest. The work is a history of the wars of the Persians against the Greeks, from the age of Cyrus to the

battle of Mycale, in the reign of Xerxes; and, besides this, it gives an account of the most celebrated nations in the world.

Here is the Epos: Epic poetry still had a profound influence, and Epic prose, as written by Herodotus, had such a charm, and yielded such a power over the Greeks, before whom it was read or recited—as he did at the Olympian games in his thirty-ninth year—that he was acclaimed as the “Father of History,” and he was received with such universal applause that the names of the Nine Muses were unanimously given to the nine books into which it is divided. But the title, “Father of History,” does not claim for Herodotus the honour of being the first historian, for he himself mentions Hecatæus, the historian, who was born 549 years before Christ, and was known as the historian of Miletus.

Herodotus is among the historians what Homer is among the poets, and Demosthenes among the orators. His style abounds with elegance, ease, and sweetness. It is mellifluous, and being anecdotal, is interesting reading. It resembles an Oriental style more than the writings of any other Greek author. At the same time, it is simple, and generally perspicuous, often highly poetical both in expression and sentiment, and the whole is

conceived in the spirit of an Epic poem, one great action throughout it, to which all others are subordinate, namely, the Conquest of the Persians by the Greeks.

Homer, in his two celebrated poems called the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey," has displayed the most consummate knowledge of human nature, and rendered himself immortal by the sublimity, the fire, sweetness, and elegance of his poetry. He is supposed to have been a wandering minstrel, as he must have been accurately acquainted with the geography of Greece and the northern part of the Archipelago. The existence of such wandering minstrels seems to be shown by the hymn of Apollo, quoted by Thucydides, as the notices of Phemius and Damoxenus in the Homeric poems prove the existence of bards attached to particular Courts.

In a measure, both Herodotus and Homer may be said to be the Annalists of a conflict between East and West, which has been waged from time immemorial, which has been a matter of such concern in modern times, and which inevitably must be expected in times to come; and, perhaps, in a more aggravated form. The Chinese Empire in its awakened form, presents to us a problem of an overwhelming force, which may well be regarded as a menace in the future, which Western civilisation

and decadency may find too strong to resist or to master. Japan has shown in what way the Eastern mind may grasp all the advances and improvements of the Western mind, and utilise them with such effect, and, after only a moderately slight acquaintance, that both by sea and land they have proved themselves the equals and even the superiors of first-class Western powers.

The Trojans are the Eastern nations, like the Persians of Herodotus; and if we substitute the Turks for the Trojans, we have a drama that for four hundred years has been played in the part of the near East which in the present moment is offering a problem very difficult of solution, and the far-reaching consequences of which it is impossible to conjecture.

It may be interesting to discuss as to how far Herodotus's choice of the Ionic dialect testifies to his conception of himself as the successor of Homer.

The Ionic dialect, one of the four written varieties of the ancient Greek language, was spoken in the Ionian Colonies of Asia Minor. What the original language was that Homer wrote must be a subject of conjecture. To say that he wrote in Ionic dialect means that the new and the old Ionic, and others, were mere varieties of the great dialect itself.

Homer has passed through too many hands, and has been transcribed too many times, and particularly has been imitated by a race of men called Homeridæ, who imitated Homer, enlarged upon him, and interpolated his poems with verses of their own, so that it is impossible for anyone to fix upon a dialect and to say positively that the original Homer was written in that. That Herodotus wrote in Ionic dialect, though a Dorian, need excite no surprise. He was a wanderer, a great observer of all kinds of languages, and if he wrote his history in Ionic dialect, it would be that he was familiar with it and chose it because it suited his subject. Dwellers on the sea-coast like the Dorians, would have many languages and dialects to hold converse with, and sea-coast dialects are notoriously variant, as witness the Chinese, the language of Shanghai, Pekin; and all along the littoral have so changed that the original of Confucius as spoken in the interior is quite a different language altogether.

According to Herodotus (*Euterpe* ii. 53), "Hesiod and Homer lived 400 years before my time, and not more, and these were they who framed a theogony for the Greeks and gave names to the gods. But the poets said to have been before them, in my opinion, were after them." And Sappho, the poetess (*Euterpe* ii. 135), is spoken of by Herodotus

as sister to Scamandronymus, and her date has been fixed at six hundred years before Christ. Her compositions were all extant in the age of Horace, but of these compositions nothing now remains but two fragments, whose uncommon sweetness and elegance show how notoriously the praises of the ancients have been bestowed upon the poetess, who, for the sublimity of her genius, was called the Tenth Muse.

If Herodotus be taken as the master of the Epic style as an historian, we can only say that it is the best continuation of that style.

The Genealogy of the Epic may be explained by the following table :—

EPIC POETRY (of HOMER).*

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| By developing the Prelude, Terpander created Greek music, which attained its first <i>κατάστασις</i> in the lyrics of the Aælian poets, Sappho, Alcæus, etc. | By abandoning the Prelude the rhapsodists lost the poetical moment and gradually passed, through Hesiod and others, into didactic poets and philosophers. | The old Epic had a literary life and continuance, and gave the form and spirit to Greek history. |
|--|---|--|

Modern travellers and explorers cannot but find in the narratives of Herodotus a vast amount of

* See Rowbotham's "History of Music."

information that is tolerably accurate. For instance, the nature of the River Nile and that perplexing puzzle which was kept a secret for so many ages—its sources. The anomaly of the rising of the Nile in summer and its fall in the winter aroused his curiosity and search. Among the theories, he found one which he disdained with contempt, but which has since proved to be true, namely, that the Nile is fed from melted snow, and he naturally asks how it can flow from snow when the sources are apparently in the hottest parts of the earth ? The answer he gives is, that the sources of the Nile, which are bottomless, flow from between two mountains called Crophi and Mophi. He also states that some youths who travelled far south came across some diminutive men, who carried them off to their city, where there was a great river flowing from west to east (Murchison Falls ?). Interesting particulars follow: the men carry burdens on their heads, the women on their shoulders. The Greeks write from left to right ; the Egyptians from right to left.

As regards the authenticity of what he wrote, he carefully adopted a sound maxim. To quote his own words : “ I must say what has been told me ; I need not, therefore, believe all.”

II.

THUCYDIDES.

BORN 471 B.C.—DIED 401 B.C.

THUCYDIDES, the celebrated Greek historian, was born at Athens about the year 471 B.C. His father's name was Olorus, and among his ancestors he reckoned the great Miltiades. His youth was distinguished by an eager desire to excel in the vigorous exercises and gymnastic amusements which called the attention of contemporaries, and when he reached the years of manhood he appeared in the Athenian armies. During the Peloponnesian War he was commissioned by his countrymen to relieve Amphipolis, but the quick march of Brasidas, the Lacedæmonian general, defeated his operations, and Thucydides, unsuccessful in his expedition, was banished from Athens. This happened in the eighth year of the celebrated war, and in the place of his banishment the general began to write an impartial history of the important events which had happened

during his administration, and which still continued to agitate the several States of Greece. This famous history is continued only to the twenty-first year of the war, and the remaining part of the time till the demolition of the walls of Athens was described by the pen of Theopompus and Xenophon.

Thucydides wrote in the Attic dialect as possessed of more vigour, purity, elegance, and energy. He spared neither time nor money to procure authentic material, and the Athenians, as well as their enemies, furnished him with many valuable communications, which contributed to throw great light on the several transactions of the war.

His history has been divided into eight books, the last of which is imperfect, and is supposed to have been written by his daughter.

The character of this interesting history is well known, and the noble emulation of the writer will ever be admired, who shed tears when he heard Herodotus repeat his history of the Persian Wars at the public festivals of Greece.

The historian of Halicarnassus has been compared with the son of Olorus, but each has his own peculiar excellence. Sweetness of style, grace, and elegance of expression may be called the characteristics of the former, while Thucydides stands unequalled for

the fire of his descriptions, the conciseness, and, at the same time, the strong and energetic matter of his narratives. Thucydides, however, has many faults of style. He is too concise ; he is crabbed and obscure ; his language is often affected, like that of the Athenian gentlemen and literati of his day.

Thucydides is the first who created the philosophy of history. Now, the philosophy of history is the explanation of the great events of history by the application of general principles of human life and conduct. At the same time, the explanation can be built upon other grounds ; for example : Froissart explains nearly everything by the direct intervention of God. We find this explanation given in the Monkish historians, and very forcibly in the Old Testament. Whatever it be, it is infant philosophy of history. That Thucydides took a more rational view of cause and effect in history was due to the age in which he lived.

In the study of history, observation of the cause and effect of events is necessarily thrust upon the attention. The successes, faults, failures, and follies of the actors give us examples and warnings which statesmen lay to heart. In reading history we penetrate into the motives and policy of the leading actors. We trace the rise and fall in the prosperity of a nation from events which at the time, perhaps,

escape the notice that is due to them, but when viewed in due perspective, in after years, convey to us the weight and significance of legislation and morality in the formation of national well-being and prosperity. It is the study of history carried to profundity which enables us to draw from events those lessons of political wisdom which have always been the favourite study of thoughtful men.

History, to be instructive, therefore, must be free from bias. We must not be misled by party prejudice ; nor do we act wisely when we choose an author who flagrantly perverts the statements of facts, attributing to the authors of them unworthy motives, and striving to derive therefrom some perversion which will give impetus or advantage to some cause which the writer consciously or unconsciously favours.

The great charm about the work of Thucydides in this respect is this, that although a contemporary, and one who had taken part actively in public affairs, he writes as freely from party feeling as if he had lived at an age long subsequent to the events which he relates.

Macaulay says distinctly, " He is the greatest historian that ever lived." Professor Jowett, who in 1881 edited a superb translation, gave all his transcendent abilities and scholarship up to a task

that must have been the delight of his life—a no mean testimonial to the genius of Thucydides.

Macaulay declares that no prose composition in the world ranks so high as the seventh book. Dr. Mahaffy's estimate of the genius of the great historian is interesting : “ In acuteness of observation, in intellectual force and breadth, in calmness of judgment, in dignity of language, there has never been a historian greater than Thucydides.”

All the narratives of Thucydides are authentic, as he himself was interested in the events he mentioned ; his impartiality is indubitable, as he betrays nowhere the least resentment against his countrymen and the factious partisans of Cleon, who had banished him from Athens. He spared neither time nor money to procure authentic material, and the Athenians as well as their enemies furnished him with many valuable communications which contributed to throw light on the different transactions of the war : a sufficient testimonial of the authenticity and trustworthiness of his history. In this respect Thucydides may be compared to the great philosopher Aristotle, who studied nature and made his deductions from the very fount of human nature as it was, and not as it was represented by the mythology and divinity of his age.

Many have blamed Thucydides for the injudicious

distribution of his subject, and while for the sake of accuracy the whole is divided into summers and winters, the thread of the history is intercepted, the scene continually shifted, and the reader, unable to pursue events to the end, is transported from Persia to Peloponnesia, and from the walls of Syracuse to the coast of Corcyra. His animated harangues have been universally admired ; he found a model in Herodotus, but he greatly surpassed the original, and succeeding historians have adopted with success a peculiar mode of writing which introduces a general addressing himself to the passions and feelings of his armies. The history of Thucydides was so much admired that Demosthenes, to acquire the art of condensation and pregnancy of expression, transcribed it eight times, and read it with such attention that he could almost repeat it by heart.

Thucydides, in speaking of the Trojan War, states that the forces under Agamemnon, though greatly in advance of any previous Grecian armament, enumerating the ships as being 1,200 in number, in which he is at variance with Homer on the same subject, declares that it was not to be compared with the armaments of the Peloponnesian War. In introducing speeches, he gives indications of the state of affairs—the general

opinions on political matters, and to form a link to couple together the transactions narrated ; at the same time, to give a welcome relief to the monotony of merely taking notice of events. This practice is only moderately indulged in by Herodotus, but Thucydides almost goes into the other extreme, by making the speeches so long and involved that, as Herodotus sagely remarked on one occasion, "The speaker often forgot what he said at the beginning, and did not know what he was talking about in the end." But the addresses of Cleon and the reply of Deodotus are admirable instances of a dialogue being utilised for party purposes.

Cleon, speaking of "Orators who either from vanity or worse motives finding fault with things as they were and proposing some innovation." "And your Orators who wish again to stir this question must either maintain a paradox to display their talents, or must be bribed to make the worse cause appear the better, but it is your own folly that gives them encouragement, your passion for novelty, your admiration of talent tempts them to labour rather to gratify your craving for intellectual excitement than to propose to you sound sense in simple language" (Book iii. 38). And the reply of Deodotus : "There is a worse evil than the eloquent

speeches of men of talent, and that is the coarse calumnies of men of no talent, who, unable to cope with their adversaries fairly, or to answer their reasonings, adopt the easier course of maligning their motives, and trying to silence them by setting up the cry that they speak only from interested motives" (Book iii. 10 and 11). Or the speech of Brasidas (Book iv. 85-87) : " I came here as your deliverer, and marvel that you do not at once receive me. Every State that accedes to my solicitation shall become the independent ally of Lacedæmon. Above all, I disclaim most solemnly all thought of abusing your compliance to the exaltation of one party among you, and the depression of the other, for this were to earn your hatred and not your gratitude."

These and other equally admirable examples of special pleading will exemplify the statement that Thucydides attempts to evolve a political philosophy by the remarks of the speakers.

The practice of introducing speeches was the most illuminating way of bringing before the readers the different characters of the chief actors in the campaign, their objects, the state of politics at the time, the reasons for certain operations being undertaken. Especially must we notice the state of the politics at Athens, which began with

an aristocracy, then, as adverse fortune befell their arms in Sicily, as is always the case in similar circumstances, the *vox populi* was raised, and a democratic form of government was demanded.

We next consider Thucydides as a Sophist. During the Peloponnesian War he was commissioned to relieve Amphipolis, but the quick march of Brasidas, the Lacedæmonian general, defeated his operations, as he offered very moderate terms to induce Amphipolis to surrender, terms which they accepted. This is the only operation of consequence which we find Thucydides engaged in; therefore, it is not here we can trace any evidence of his sophistry. Rather must it be found in his observation of human character; his penetration of motives, and the policy of the leading actors; his power of drawing lessons of political wisdom, which has always made his work a favourite study with thoughtful men. Politics in his time was in a state of flux, and the tide of success, alternating between the oligarchy, the aristocracy, and the democracy, gave him a unique opportunity of judging the advantages or disadvantages of the exercise of power of either party. No man ever had an opportunity of coming to a conclusion with regard to the welfare of the State than Thucydides had in those troublous times which

were bringing Athens down almost to a state of extinction. We seldom, however, find him giving his own opinions; if he does, he puts them in the mouth of the orators that he makes his puppets. It is all most admirable and subtle, and places the great historian in the first rank of great writers, whose wish and motive was to advance the good and the high honour of his country.

III.

XENOPHON.

BORN 444 B.C.

XENOPHON was an Athenian, the son of Gryllus, and was celebrated as a general, an historian, and a philosopher. In the school of Socrates he received those instructions which afterwards so eminently distinguished him at the head of an army in literary solitude.

It may be interesting to strike a comparison between him and the Spanish chroniclers, such as Bernal Diaz and others, who were soldiers no less than historians.

Bernal Diaz, one of the Spanish chroniclers who took part in the expedition of Cortez in 1518 to undertake the conquest of Mexico, is a fine example, inasmuch as his writings resemble in many features the writings of Xenophon, and the resemblance is due to the admiration all Spaniards had for the great historians of Greece and Rome.

An instance is given that a Spanish writer so admired Livy's histories that he took the journey to Rome—no inconsiderable task in those days—just to see Livy face to face, and, having done that, returned content. Even at a later date the writings of Tasso caught the Spanish taste to that extent that imitations of his style were numerous, although it must be confessed they fell far short of success.

As Xenophon loved to record each stage of his march and to give descriptions of the nature of the country, the character of the inhabitants, and everything in the nature of the climate, natural productions, sport, such as the chase of bustards, so Bernal Diaz compiled his chronicles in much the same style, and beyond doubt aimed at imitation. Imitation of standards cannot be stigmatized as plagiarism, otherwise our own orators, writers, and historians must come under the same stigma. What we owe to the Latins and Grecians in the way of literature can scarcely be measured.

We educate our youth on the thrilling stories of the tenth legion ; we read the orations to cultivate a Ciceronian style ; we choose Livy as a model of our Latin prose, and, if we thus imbue ourselves with the writers of the Augustan age, or equally store our intellects with the wealth of Grecian

literature, is it small wonder that we find the same thing in writers of such exquisite taste and culture as the Spanish?

In no modern society has there been so great a number of men eminent, at once, in literature and war, as Spain has produced in the sixteenth century. Almost every distinguished writer was also a distinguished soldier. Boscan bore arms with high reputation. Alonso de Ercilla bore a conspicuous part in that war of Aranca.

Hurtado de Mendoza was a stern Proconsul, and his poems have been compared to Horace. Lope de Vega Carpio sailed in the Armada. Cervantes, the author of "Don Quixote," was wounded at Lepanto.

Just as Queen Elizabeth's reign produced our greatest writers, so we find Spain with a number of celebrated men far in excess of other times. At that time the Empire of Spain, under Philip II., was the most powerful and splendid that ever existed in the world.

When we come to compare Xenophon with Julius Cæsar, we have something tangible to discuss. Both were warriors; both were able historians; and both have left us trustworthy chronicles of the important campaigns of which they took the most important part, for both were commanders-in-chief.

In our times, General Sir Garnet Wolseley has given us one of the most trustworthy memoirs of Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, and the wars in which he was engaged.

In discussing the style of Xenophon, we find that it is one of simplicity and elegance, and has procured for him the name of the Athenian Muse, and the "Bee of Greece"; and, Quintilian has been induced to say that the graces dictated his language, and that the goddess of persuasion dwelt upon his lips. But in his "Anabasis," he has been accused of too much partiality to his favourite Master Cyrus, and while he describes with contempt the imprudent operations of the Persians, he does not neglect to show that his mind was warped almost in his efforts of extolling his idol.

The "Cyropædia" has given rise to much criticism, and while some warmly maintain that it is a faithful account of the life of Cyrus the Great, and declare that it is supported by the authority of Scripture, others as vehemently deny its authenticity.

According to the opinions of Plato and Cicero, the "Cyropædia" of Xenophon was a moral romance; and these venerable philosophers support the view that the historian did not so much write what Cyrus had been as what every good and virtuous

monarch ought to be. And what gives weight to this view, is the fact that Plato as well as himself were pupils and admirers of the great Socrates, and Xenophon was imbued to the finger-tips with the Socratic philosophy. Socrates may be said to have dominated his life, as he dominated all the schools of the Platonists, the Peripatetics, the Academics, the Cyrenaics, Stoics, and other schools of thought ; and we are indebted to Xenophon and Plato—his most celebrated pupils—for everything which relates to the life and circumstances of this great philosopher. It may be said that the philosophy of Socrates created an epoch in the history of the human mind.

Xenophon has great regard for valour owing to his being a warrior and strategist, and he held up the Lacedæmonians as ideals, for they rendered themselves illustrious for their courage and intrepidity, for their love of honour and liberty, and for their aversion to sloth and luxury. They never applied themselves to any trade, their only employment being the use and practice of arms. It was an heroic age, and the heroic was, naturally, a matter of worship and emulation. The Lacedæmonians were renowned for their valour in the field, their moderation and temperance at home, and revered by all the neighbouring princes. But the women

were as courageous as the men, and many a mother has celebrated with festivals the death of her son who had fallen in battle. In the affairs of Greece, the interest of the Lacedæmonians was powerful, and obtained the superiority for five hundred years. Small wonder then, that Xenophon regarded them as types of what the best of men should be, that they affected his thoughts and actions. When banished from Athens for accompanying Cyrus against his country by a government who were afraid that he had offended their Persian invader and would-be conqueror, he retired to Scillus, a small town of the Lacedæmonians, where he composed and wrote for the information of posterity those illuminating works that have rendered him illustrious. No wonder that he imitated them ! For when he was offering sacrifice, he was informed that Gryllus, his eldest son, had been killed in the battle of Mantinea, upon which he tore the garland from his head ; but when he was told that his son had died like a Greek, and had given a mortal wound to Epaminondas, the enemy's general, he replaced the flowers on his head and continued the sacrifice, exclaiming that the pleasure he derived from the valour of his son was greater than the grief which his unfortunate death occasioned.

In his "Hiero," a dialogue, he compares the

misery which attends the tyrant, and the felicity of a virtuous prince. Bred under a household of severe simplicity, whose duty was the paramount, together with honour; educated by the Spartan Socrates, and imbued with his spirit, Xenophon not only extolled and imitated the Lacedæmonians, but was himself one at heart. And, as regards Xenophon being a pupil of Socrates, it would be a poor way of putting it, just to say Xenophon was a pupil, or rather a student of this great man. There existed between them a friendship of the nearest kind. To Socrates, Xenophon owed the salvation of his life as well as the enlightenment of his mind, and it is a regrettable fact that Socrates never committed any of his own thoughts to writing, and for what we know of them we are indebted to Xenophon, the apologist of Socrates.

Now the “*Cyropædia*” of Xenophon is evidently one written after the philosophic teaching of his master. His “*Hellenics*,” which was written as a continuation of Thucydides, also bears the same impress, and his “*Memorabilia*” of Socrates presents us with the idea of a mind that was indelibly and profoundly imbued with his friend and master’s lofty spirit. And in his “*Apology*,” he has shown himself as Valerius Maximus observes, a perfect master of the philosophy of that great

man, and he has explained his doctrine and moral precepts with all the success of persuasive eloquence and conscious integrity.

These are the most famous of his compositions which may be called Socratic, to which we may add the "Dialogue of Hiero." It may be mentioned that Hiero was King of Syracuse, who rendered himself odious in the beginning of his reign by his cruelty and avarice. Pindar has softened in a measure the roughness of his severity, and rendered him the patron of learning, genius, and merit. One thing to his credit was, what Pindar made the most of, his victories in the Olympic games.

IV.

POLYBIUS.

BORN 204 B.C.—DIED 122 B.C.

POLYBIUS wrote an interesting history in Greek, divided into forty books, and began with the Wars of Rome with the Carthaginians, and finished with the Conquest of Macedonia by Paulus. The first five books are extant, fragments of the following twelve are numerous ; the rest are lost.

The history of Polybius is admired for its authenticity, and being experimentally and by profession acquainted with military operations, he has been recommended in every age and country as the best master in the art of war. Being carried to Rome as a prisoner of war, and there gaining the esteem of Scipio and Fabius, he accompanied the former in his expedition, and was present at the taking of Carthage.

Like a true patriot, he felt the distress of his own country, and made use of his influence at

Rome to relieve in some measure the hardships under which Greece was labouring as a Roman province.

The rest of his days, after leaving his patron and benefactor, Scipio, was spent in honoured retirement amongst his grateful countrymen, and he died about 124 B.C., in his eighty-second year, full of honours, and the conscious satisfaction that by his benevolence and humanity he had won the affection of his countrymen.

V.

ARRIANUS.

BORN A.D. 90.

ARRIANUS was a native of Nicomedia, and about A.D. 140, in the reign of Adrian, he wrote seven books of the wars of Alexander with great judgment and fidelity.

His narrative was composed on the authority of Aristobulus and Ptolemy, two of Alexander's officers. No historical record, therefore, has a better claim to public faith. His style is unadorned, chaste, perspicuous, and manly. It is to his writings that we owe all our knowledge of the sublime morality of Epictetus, of whom he was the favourite disciple. He was called the second Xenophon for his elegance and sweetness of diction, and was distinguished for his acquaintance with military and political life.

VI.

PLUTARCH.

DIED ABOUT A.D. 140.

THE most esteemed of Plutarch's works are his "Lives of Illustrious Men." These are produced in all their different characters with wonderful skill and impartiality. He neither misrepresents their virtues nor hides the foibles of his heroes. He writes with precision and fidelity, and though his diction is neither pure nor elegant, yet there is energy and animation, and in many descriptions he is inferior to no historian. In some of his narratives, however, he is often too circumstantial, his remarks are often injudicious, and when he compares the heroes of Greece and Rome, the candid reader can easily find out which side of the Adriatic gave the historian birth. Some have accused him of not knowing the genealogy of his heroes, and have censured him for his superstition, yet, for all this, he is most entertaining, the most instructive

and interesting of all writers of ancient history; and were a man of true taste and judgment asked what book he wished to save from destruction, of all the profane compositions of antiquity, he would, perhaps, without hesitation reply, "The Lives of Plutarch."

In his moral treatises, Plutarch appears in a different character. They, however, contain many useful lessons and curious facts, a large residue of information, and many useful reflections.

The Emperor Trajan was his patron. He travelled much, like all historians, in the territories of Egypt and his own country in quest of knowledge, and died about A.D. 140.

VII.

EUSEBIUS.

BORN A.D. 265—DIED A.D. 340.

EUSEBIUS flourished in the time of the Emperor Constantine, with whom he contracted a strong friendship, and whose life he wrote, a history which is styled by some as a panegyrical biography. Being the Bishop of Cæsarea, he was much concerned in the theological disputes between Arius and Athanasius, and belonged himself to that class of thinkers called "Semi-arian." His "Ecclesiastical History" is, to the present generation, universally acknowledged as trustworthy. Originally it was in ten books, from the Advent of our Saviour to the defeat of Licinius by Constantine, A.D. 324. He also wrote in fifteen books, "De preparatione Evangelica." In this work, he examines the various systems of theosophy and cosmogony of the ancient philosophers, the purest part of which he maintains was borrowed from the Jewish sacred writings.

Also, “*De Demonstratione Evangelica*,” in twenty books, of which only ten have come down to us. It consists of further proofs of the truth of the Christian faith, chiefly directed against the Jews, drawn from the books of the Old Testament.

The Chronicle, or Universal History, was only known by fragments until it was fortunately discovered in an Armenian Manuscript Version found in Constantinople, and published at Milan in 1818. The work is divided into two books: the first entitled “*Chronography*,” contains brief separate sketches of the history of the various nations and states of the old world, from the Creation till the year A.D. 323. His other works are: “*Onomasticon urbium et Lexorum Sacræ Scripturæ*,” a life of his friend Pamphilus, whose name he adopted in addition to his own, and the “*Theophania*,” which was discovered in 1839. It throws an important light on his religious opinions. There are other minor works, but he will always be known as the “Father of Ecclesiastical History.”

VIII.

PROCOPIUS.

BORN A.D. 500—DIED A.D. 565.

PROCOPIUS, a Greek historian of Cæsarea Palestina, Secretary to the celebrated Belisarius A.D. 534. He wrote the history of the reign of Justinian and greatly celebrated the hero whose favours and patronage he enjoyed. This history is divided into eight books, two of which give an account of the Persian War, two of the Vandals, and four of the Goths, down to the year A.D. 553, and was afterwards continued in five books by Agathias till 559. Of this performance the character is great, though, perhaps, the historian is often too severe on the Emperor.

He also wrote “The Secret History” (of the Empress Theodora), a work greatly read.

IX.

CÆSAR.

BORN 100 B.C.—DIED 44 B.C.

THE one historian of world-wide fame is Caius Julius Cæsar, who stands out to us as eminent above all the Latin historians, because the history is more familiar to us, and because it is easier Latin Cæsar's "Commentaries," especially the "Gaul," are among the most fascinating of all books ever written. The very schoolboys, who laboriously toil along, dictionary in hand, burn with ardour as the tenth legion does something great, or the Commander performs some feat of extra audacity. The language so beautifully polished, yet almost unequalled for its straightforward simplicity and delicate appropriateness to its martial purpose. This is no parade warfare that we are told of, but hard fighting with a barbarous foe. He wrote his "Commentaries" on the spot where he fought his battles, and the composition, made under all

the difficulties of a camp life, are polished and elegant, and correct in style. His whole writings are virile and expressive of his boast, "Veni, Vidi, Vici." Writings of a man of this character could only be animated, exact, terse, graphic, and dramatic. Pliny tells us he conquered three hundred nations, took eight hundred cities, and defeated three millions of men. This was the man who, in his first campaign in Spain, was observed to stare at the statue of Alexander, and shed tears at the recollection that that hero had conquered the world at an age in which he himself had done nothing.

What could we expect of a man of these attainments, who was accustomed to carry everything before him, whose life was one of continued history of success, but the brilliant chronicler of everything as it happened, and as he had caused it to happen. Let us mark his progress as he crossed the Rubicon, sword in hand, and in sixty days had driven Pompey away and become master of Italy. Thence to Spain, where he conquered the partisans of Pompey ; then again seeking Pompey, as he said, a general without troops, to the plains of Pharsalia 48 B.C., where Pompey was defeated and fled to Egypt. Then having made a noble use of his victory, pursued his adversary for some time, he forgot himself

in the arms of Cleopatra ; then extricating himself from great danger at Alexandria, with wonderful skill and success made Egypt tributary to his power. When we compare Cæsar with Livy we are aware of a different genius. Everything is light, bright, and charming, inasmuch as Cæsar was a man of swiftness and activity, passing on from deed to deed, and giving us all the vividness of a deed recorded while the doing was yet fresh in the mind. Had it not been for his agility, his valuable "Commentaries on the Gallic War" would have been lost ; for when Cæsar saved his life in the bay of Alexandria, he was obliged to swim from his ship, with his arms in one hand and his "Commentaries" in the other. Pliny, in speaking in praise of Cæsar, most aptly and with fidelity remarks that Cæsar could employ at the same time his ears to listen, his eyes to read, his hand to write, and his mind to dictate. The fact that he wrote his "Commentaries" on the Gallic War on the spot where he fought his battles—in a work, the composition of which we find not only elegance of style, but also correctness of material—puts Cæsar on a pedestal where he is unrivalled. There is a tendency to overlook the warrior's literary attainments in the glamour of his victories, whereas it is more than probable that it was the scholar who furnished

the general ; and if he had not been highly educated he would not have exhibited such prodigious powers. In this respect we have examples in our own times of our two distinguished Generals—Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener. To these we can certainly add Lord Wolseley, whose “Life of Churchill, Duke of Marlborough,” testified to a great literary ability.

Sulla, who was an excellent judge of human nature, dreaded Cæsar’s abilities. “There is many a Marius,” he said, “in that young man.”

Not only do we find Cæsar dominating the Senate in times of peace, and introducing order into every department of the State, reforming the Calendar, draining the marshes of Italy, improving the navigation of the Tiber, embellishing Rome, making a complete survey and delineation of the Empire ; but he was beloved, master as he was, and his murder intensified the idolatry with which he was regarded by the people of Rome. Comparing Cæsar, in all these respects, which can only be set forth in a large study of his life with other writers, who had little to recommend them but their writings—as, for instance, Sallust—is to dwarf into insignificance the latter, who could be a time-server in order to promote his advantage and prosperity. Sallust spent his money on himself—Cæsar left his vast fortune to the people of Rome.

Not only was he a man of great abilities, but great in every respect, transcendently and uniquely great.

When we compare Cæsar with Thucydides, we can say of Thucydides that he was one of the best historians as well as one of the greatest generals of antiquity. What he might have done for the Empire in his civil capacity, had he been permitted to exercise his abilities, is a matter only of conjecture ; but, after his defeat by Brasidas in the eighth year of the Peloponnesian War, he was sent into banishment, and thus his brilliance as an administrator was never exercised. Nor can we compare a general who suffered defeat with Cæsar, who was uniformly victorious. Next, to compare Cæsar with Xenophon, we have more ground to go upon ; but still, with a vast difference. Xenophon's strategy is manifested in a retreat, not in a conquest ; an achievement beyond parallel, for he had to bring his army safely back under almost unsurmountable difficulties. Six hundred leagues from home, in a country hostile, without money, without provisions ; but at the end of 215 days, it was happily accomplished. But, again, exile eclipsed his chance of displaying his powers if he possessed any aptitude for administration, hence, his achievement was stupendous, and his history of histories places him in the rank of the highest of his contemporaries.

Lastly, we compare Cæsar with Arrian, or Flavius Arrianus. Here we have a writer and also a legislator, for, in A.D. 136, Hadrian appointed him Governor of Cappadocia, and Consul of Rome, A.D. 146. We look in vain for any exploits that would lift him up to anything like the heights of the great Cæsar. His history of Alexander's campaigns in Asia was founded principally on other histories. It is said to be inferior to that of Quintus Curtius, although far more accurate and trustworthy. His writings include "The Philosophical Disquisitions of Epictetus," of which four are extant, which he tells us contain the very words of his master; and other smaller works: "Periplus Ponti Euxini," a work on the affairs of India, a treatise on tactics, and a book on hunting.

Making the very best we can of it, we find no mark of attainment that will hold comparison with Cæsar, for he still stands out as the colossus of Roman citizens, as well as of Roman warriors and writers, unsurpassed in every department, and unapproachable.

X.

SALLUST.

BORN 86 B.C.—DIED 34 B.C.

MOST readers find pleasure in the terse and concentrated energy of Sallust, whose two histories of the Cataline Conspiracy and the Jugurthine War, are masterpieces which have delighted every generation since their production. We all admit that they are quite inaccurate, as full of the partisanship of the democracy—the Whigs of the time—as anything of Macaulay's in our own day; but we cannot choose but enjoy them the more at every fresh reading. After the flowing, long-windedness of Cicero, the close, crisp sentences of Sallust rush through the mind like a freshening breeze. Sallust had all the great equipments of the aristocrat—assurance, greed, extravagance, disregard for the feelings of others. He became practically bankrupt from extravagance, but extricated himself from all difficulties by embracing the

cause of Cæsar. For this he was made Governor of Numidia, and, while in the Province, Sallust behaved with unusual tyranny. He enriched himself by plundering the Africs, and on his return to Rome he built himself a magnificent house and bought gardens which, from their delightful and pleasant situation, still preserve the name of the Gardens of Sallust. No one could be better acquainted with the vices that prevailed in the capital of Italy, and no one seems to have been more severe in his strictures against the follies of his age, and the failings of which he himself was guilty in the eyes of the world. So, although his descriptions are elegantly correct, and his harangues nervous and animated, and well suited to the character and the different pursuits of the great man, in whose mouths they are placed, yet, underlying all this there is the apparent insincerity of the cynic, the laughter and mockery of the renegade, and the unwarrantable partiality of his narrations. His passing over in silence the meritorious actions of his rival, Cicero, is an evidence that his mind was warped by prejudice and passion. An immortal hatred existed between these two, dating back from the marriage of Sallust to the divorced wife of Cicero. Can we wonder that there is an artificiality in his style; and, placing his writings

alongside of a sincere and truthful and impartial historian like Xenophon, that in spite of cleverness, his vigour and animation, his wonderful knowledge of the human heart, we are conscious of a lack of sincerity of purpose that throws a sense of mistrust, even when we are absorbed in the genius displayed. Xenophon has not escaped the accusation of partiality : too fond of extolling the virtues of his favourite Cyrus ; but in his "Memorabilia of Socrates" and his "Apology" he has shown himself in his best light of conscious integrity. The character of Xenophon is so entirely different to Sallust : his sincerity of attachment to his master, Socrates ; his tenderness and resignation on providence, as marked at the death of his son, Gryllus ; are sentiments that never could be shared by Sallust ; and, in consequence, we find in the latter an artificiality which we might expect in a callous mind, but which would never be observed in the candid warm-hearted disciple of Socrates. Simplicity of mind was the characteristic of the one ; duplicity of the other ; and these are manifest in their writings.

XI.

LIVY.

BORN 59 B.C.—DIED A.D. 17.

LIVY was the last of the Augustan writers which has the designation of the Golden Age. This writer occupies the position among the best of the splendid group. The style is so singularly varied and beautiful that it may be taken as the crowning point of the language. Never afterwards was such fine Latin prose written. Quintilian says, “his felicity of expression is admirable, and his rich style flows like milk.” In Livy the heroes live; the distinctness of outline and warmth of colouring are admirable; he is interesting as a romance. Ages of critics at work upon the text have discovered in him a want of erudition, a disposition not to sift authorities, nor investigate ancient primary sources of evidence, but few would have Livy otherwise than he is.

It may be true that he took much of his work

second hand, rarely compiled from original sources, but the object aimed at may be described as an architectural structure building up his various decades, so as to bring the various histories together into one readable, popular narrative, and wonderful was his success. Tacitus and Seneca speak in the highest terms of the beauty of Livy's style, and what would hardly be expected, the fidelity of his histories.

His "Annals" give an account of the history of Rome from the earliest period to the death of Drusus 9 B.C. The first decade takes us down to 293 B.C. Cicero appears in the Golden Age of Latin literature, the close of the Republic and the dawn of the Empire, 106-44 B.C. His style is so perfect; no writer approaches him for elegance. The works of this celebrated man, of which, according to some, the tenth part is scarce extant, have been edited by the best scholars in every country.

In every one of his writings there is construction—one part is skilfully handled so as to conform with the plan—a blending of phrases so as to give beauty to the whole. And so we find in every Oration—every work is complete in itself—rounded off in periods—every word appropriate and in its place, a polish appearing at all times, never departing in digression from the theme, and all

harmoniously blending, and thus he owes his position to the great orator and writer to what may be called his careful architectural style. In this respect we find that Livy has a compeer, for though Livy may be found tripping at times in his facts, nothing but admiration can be given to his style, and to the masterful ordering of his characters as they are brought forward and made to assume the flesh and blood of realities in the various epochs of the decades in which his writings are divided.

It may be some sacrifice was made to style ; but he who goes to build a great edifice—and Livy undertook a stupendous task—may reject here and there. He may select what seems to him to be goodly for the beauty of his work, looking rather to the pleasure of a myth than to its absolute trustworthiness ; but readers are thankful for such additions, even grotesqueness may be admitted, as the architect adds the gargoyle to his finials ; still grotesqueness has its beauty and its charm, and though his provincialisms have been branded with “patavinity,” there is nothing obscure about them.

Many superstitious ideas appear in Livy’s writings. For example, he mentions that milk and blood were rained from heaven, and that an ox

spoke. He was only giving his readers specimens of the superstitions that had made an indelible impression upon the minds of a credulous age. Everywhere he is indefatigable in the support of justice and virtue. Everywhere he is great. His style is clear and intelligible, laboured without affectation ; diffuse without tediousness, and argumentative without pedantry. In his harangues he is bold and animated, and in his narratives and descriptions he claims a decided superiority.

XII.

TACITUS.

BORN A.D. 61.

CAIUS CORNELIUS TACITUS lived in the Silver Age, in the reign of Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, Nerva, and Trajan. He was a famous historian. His works now extant are a "History," of which only a small part is preserved; a book of Annals from Augustus to Nero; a short account of Germany; and a life of Agricola. He is considered as graphic and truthful, but rather obscure. His insight into human character and the motive of men's conduct is most admirable. He was born in the reign of Nero. His father was a Roman knight, who had been appointed over Belgic Gaul.

The native genius and the rising talents of Tacitus were beheld with rapture by the Emperor Vespasian, and as he wished to protect and patronise merit, he raised the young historian to places of trust and honour. He was honoured by a Consul-

ship, and as he gave evidence of his eloquence at the bar by supporting the cause of the injured Africans against the Proconsul Marius Priscus, he was the means of causing him to be condemned for his avarice and extortion.

The friendly intercourse of Pliny and Tacitus, and the familiarity which existed between them, arose from similar principles, and a perfect conformity of manners and opinions ; yet Tacitus was as much the friend of a republican government, as Pliny was the administrator of the imperial power, and of the short-lived virtues of his patron Trajan.

The style of Tacitus has always been admired for peculiar beauty. The thoughts are great ; there is a sublimity, force, weight, and energy ; everything is treated with precision and dignity ; yet many have called him obscure, because he was apt to express his ideas in few words. This was the fruit of experience and judgment.

His history appears copious and diffuse, while the Annals which were written in his old age are less flowing as to style, more concise, and more heavily laboured. His Latin is remarkable for being pure and classical, and though a writer in the decline of the Roman Empire, he constantly uses words which are only allowable in poetry, and, therefore, may be considered obsolete in prose ;

but with him everything is sanctioned by the authority of the writers of the Augustan Age.

In his biographical sketches he displays an uncommon knowledge of human nature. The philosophy of history is seen to perfection in his works ; he paints every scene with a masterly hand, and gives every object its proper size, and in becoming colours.

If we may allow Tacitus to have let his preferences and aversions influence him at all in his writings, it would perhaps be found in his life of Cneius Julius Agricola, whose daughter he had married ; but to speak of his personal preferences and aversions, in the same breath as his friendship with Pliny—Tacitus a friend of a republican government, and Pliny an admirer of imperial power ; a friendship which became almost proverbial—is to malign the character of a great mind which had no room for smallness.

The historian everywhere shows his reader that he was a friend of public liberty and national independence ; a lover of truth, and of the general good and welfare of mankind ; and an inveterate enemy to oppression and tyrannical government. Tacitus boasted of saying that he neither would flatter the follies, or maliciously, or partially represent the extravagance of the several characters he

delineated. Candour and impartiality were his standard, and his claims to these essential qualifications of an historian have never been disputed.

It is said that the Emperor Tacitus—who reigned A.D. 275-276, boasted of being a descendant of the great historian—ordered the work of his ancestor to be placed in all public libraries, and directed that ten copies, well ascertained for accuracy and exactness, should be yearly written, that so great and so valuable a work might not be lost.

Some ecclesiastical writers have exclaimed against Tacitus for the partial manner in which he speaks of the Jews and Christians ; but it should be remembered, that he spoke the language of the Romans, and that the peculiarities of the Christians could not but draw upon them the odium and the ridicule of the Pagans, and the imputation of superstition.

In the Silver Age, Latin prose was labouring under all sorts of adventitious elements, such as Græcisms, epigram, poetical words, and expressions ; and the literary style of Tacitus bears evidence to them all. The first sentence in his Annals is a hexameter verse, which should never have been there.

Tacitus is not so dramatic as Cæsar ; but his account of the meeting of the Pannonian legions and

of the German, is one of the most masterly things ever written. He is the gatherer of the philosophy of history, and everything done in that domain reaches back to Thucydides. His life of Cneius Julius Agricola is celebrated for its purity, elegance, and the many excellent instructions and important truths which it relates, and there is noticeable in it a personal tenderness that we might expect from his relationship to Agricola.

In Tacitus we know the personages of his history better than those of our own time, and to say this in any sense as the truth is to award this great historian with the epithet of the master of the philosophy of history.

Cause and effect are carefully traced. The limits of the human mind are observed in the events recorded. What exceeds these limits are the prodigies which adorn his Annals, and compel the attention of the readers.

XIII.

DION CASSIUS.

BORN A.D. 155.

DION CASSIUS was a Latin historian who flourished in the second century, being born in A.D. 155 at Nicæa, in Bithynia. He wrote a history of Rome in Greek, and divided it into eighty books, covering the period from the arrival of Aeneas in Italy and the foundation of Alba and Rome to A.D. 229.

Unfortunately, only a small portion of this work has come down to us in its entirety. The style of what remains is pompous and learned, but the matter correct. He was an imitator of Thucydides, in that he endeavoured to give a philosophical cast to his history ; but, like all imitators, falls far short of his model.

XIV.

AMMIANUS MARCELLINUS.

BORN A.D. 320.

WITH Ammianus we pass from the historian to the gossip. He carried arms under Constantius, Julian, and Valens, and wrote a history of Rome from the reign of Domitian, where Suetonius stops, to the Emperor Valens.

His style is neither elegant nor laboured, but it is greatly valued for its veracity, and to many of the actions he mentions, the author was nearly concerned.

The history was composed at Rome, where Ammianus retired from the noise and troubles of the camp, and does not betray that severity against the Christians which other writers have manifested, though the author was warm on the subject of Paganism, the religion which for a while was the religion of the throne.

It was divided into thirty-one books, of which

only the eighteen last remain, beginning at the death of Magnentius.

Ammianus has been liberal of the encomiums upon Julian, whose favours he enjoyed, and who so eminently patronised his religion.

The negligence with which some facts are sometimes mentioned, has induced many to believe that the history of Ammianus has suffered much from the ravages of time, and that it has descended to us in a mutilated and imperfect form.

XV.

EUTROPIUS.

BORN FOURTH CENTURY.

EUTROPIUS, a Latin historian in the age of Julian, under whom he carried arms in the fatal expedition against the Persians. His origin as well as his dignity are unknown, yet some suppose from the epithet Clarissimus prefixed to his history, that he must have been a Roman senator. He wrote an epitome of the history of Rome, from the age of Romulus to the reign of the Emperor Valens, to whom the work was dedicated. Also, he wrote a treatise on medicine without being acquainted with the art. Of all his works the Roman history alone is extant. It is composed with conciseness and precision, but without elegance.

It consisted of ten books, and being short and easy was much used as a school book. Meagre as it is, for it might be contained in one hundred common sized octavo pages, it is still of some use towards filling up those gaps in history which are left in consequence of the total loss of the works of some writers, and the imperfect condition in which the works of others have come down to us.

XVI.

JEAN FROISSART.

BORN A.D. 1337—DIED A.D. 1401.

BEING brought up for the Church—an ecclesiastic—it is not surprising that Froissart's history should be modelled on the style of Biblical historians, and that he should attribute to the various mutations in the affairs of a country to the same causes as the Holy Writers.

On a review of what mankind has achieved in the way of prosperity and well-being, or has suffered in the way of adversity, Froissart could find nothing more admirable or convincing in the whole range of literature than the lessons which are revealed to us in the pages of Holy Writ. The Divine government of the world is maintained by unalterable laws, and examination of history at whatever period, or in connection with whatever people, be they civilized or savage, can only reveal to us the inflexibility of His purpose, the eternity of His scheme, and the inexorable result of resisting His Will.

Wars, famines, pestilences, rebellions, massacres, persecution, captivity, slavery, misery—all these visitations were the portion of God's chosen people; and all these things are traced as the consequences of disobedience, or lapses of the people from the purity of their religious observances. The history of the Jewish nation for two thousand years gives an unequalled proof of God's supremacy, power, and government. They are the most illuminating illustrations of God's attributes. The Bible contains an accumulation of facts which enables us to trace events to their moral causes, and these facts are so many keys to open to us the path to the secret method by which He governs the world and us.

Froissart's philosophy of history is the same as that which Dionysius of Halicarnassus taught, namely, that history is philosophy teaching by examples.

The superior efficacy of example to precept is universally acknowledged, all the laws of morality and rules of conduct are verified by experience, and are constantly submitted to its tests and examination. History adds to our own experience an immense treasure of the experience of others, and furnishes innumerable proofs by which to verify the Divine precepts, as Locke remarks: "Our knowledge begins in particulars, and so spread

itself by degrees to generalities : and a knowledge of what will probably be the effects of particular circumstances on ourselves is to be attained by a study of what has usually been the conduct of others under these circumstances."

Owing to Froissart being the son of a herald painter, he was early imbued with the deeds of chivalry ; and in his history of the French wars, which he began at the age of twenty, at the command of his dear lord and patron, Sir Robert de Namur, lord of Beaufort, the periods 1326 to 1356 were filled up in the chronicles of John le Bel, Canon of Liege, and from these chronicles Froissart drew the subject of his history ; but up to the year 1400 he used his own observation and knowledge, so that as Froissart was under the patronage of Philippa of Hainault, the admirable wife of Edward III., and as he acted in the capacity of her secretary, and as he was in the court of Richard II., it is not surprising that many of his heroes like the Black Prince, were the subject of his eulogies. In his romance, the "*Meliador*," he reproduced the songs, etc., of the Duke of Brabant, and becoming a favourite of the Count of Blois, he was enabled to enrich his history, and further to embellish them at the court of Gaston de Foix. Froissart's narrative of this visit is one of the

most interesting things in literature. Bertrand du Guesclin was, of course, the great warrior used by Froissart to exhibit the spirit of French chivalry. He was a born soldier, an adept from his youth in feats of arms, and in the war with England Bertrand du Guesclin came first to the front. After the death of the Black Prince no one could stand against the skill and patriotism of du Guesclin, and he depopulated district after district of the English in a most martial manner.

The piteous end of Richard II. made a profound impression on Froissart, and his fate formed the tragical subject of Froissart's last labour for his history. This speaks much for this maligned Prince, who, whatever his faults, was a generous patron, and could inspire, if not admiration, a sense of wonderful devotion in his historian.

Of all periods, this was one where chivalry was made almost a subject of idolatry. In many churches the recumbent figure with hands crossed told the tale of the many crusades in which figured our two great warrior kings, Richard I. and Edward I., and everywhere could be heard the praise of their valour extolled either in song or verse ; and the martial spirit of the third Edward raises this into the greatest excess of enthusiasm.

The great battles of Crecy, Poictiers, and Sluys

won for the English an undying fame, and Froissart has described the moving scenes of these wars in his brilliant, interesting style. The King's treatment of the captured King John, his endeavour to raise his spirits and set him at ease, by declaring that he has performed deeds of valour that won for him rewards of chivalry ; or, again, how amusing to read in Froissart the complaints of the French men-at-arms in Scotland.

The country was wild, the people uncivilised, even Edinburgh, the capital, was inferior to the provincial towns of Tournay and Valenciennes. There were no banquets, no balls, no tournaments. The strangers were compelled to purchase the coarsest fare at an exorbitant price, and the jealousy of the natives refused forage for their horses, and hourly laid snares for their lives, and so on.

Froissart's account, however, gives the impression that accuracy was sacrificed to humour, and many events described by him are so different from authentic reports, that it seems he often compiled his accounts from any flying report which reached him. This may be so ; but Lingard has made free use of Froissart's history about the periods of Edward III. and Richard III.—a fair testimony to the accuracy of the historian ; and much enlightenment is thrown upon the various dramas that

occurred in these reigns, not only all the battles, but such domestic events as Wat Tyler's Rebellion, the murder of Lord Stafford, etc.

Froissart's writings are mainly directed to the military exploits of the age, in our dealings with the French ; whereas the chronicles of Knyghton, Walsingham, Leland, and Stow, were more concerned with the Constitution.

The style of Froissart is highly descriptive, and details of valour are faithfully recorded. He clearly shows in his history the love he cherished for romances, and even went so far as to borrow their style. Thus, when he begins a narrative, he often uses the expression, "Now the tale says," a phrase which is to be met with in many pages of the romances of the "Round Table." But, as far as his history is concerned, this romantic taste seems to be confined entirely to the style he makes use of.

In leaving the subject of this historian, it is worthy of note that the exile Rapin has given us one of the most diffuse histories of England that ever was written. England has made many victories, but gratitude in the shape of these two men, Froissart and Rapin, count for much. To excite admiration in foreign minds has ever been the result of chivalrous acts and generous treatment, such as English people have been in the habit of displaying.

XVII.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

BORN A.D. 1552—DIED A.D. 1618.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH was born in 1552 at Hayes, in the parish of East Budleigh, Devon, and was entered a Commoner of Oriel College, Oxford, about 1568. The writings of this versatile genius are numerous. One, under the sounding title of "The Discovery of the Large, Beautiful, and Rich Empire of Guiana," contrasts ill with the gold mines that he reported of that country, which turned out to be a mere illusion. His history of the world, written during the long imprisonment of thirteen years in the Tower, stands out from all the rest of his literary efforts, which consist mostly of minor pieces. This history has been reproduced in Gardner's "History of England," and in Edmund Gosse's "Raleigh."

Raleigh wrote much and he wrote well ; but he has left little of lasting interest beside his "History."

He was a shining figure in the most resplendent age of English history, and by his courage and versatility, by his tameless spirit of adventure, by his ardent, if unscrupulous patriotism, by his eager interest in literature, his quick imagination, his rich and melodious eloquence, he has fully won his place among English worthies.

His Virginian Colony, upon which he nobly expended an immense sum, failed completely. But he has been handed down to us altogether as a picturesque nobleman, and will be immortalized by his gallantry manifested to his queen, under whose patronage his greatest exploits were performed.

After Queen Elizabeth's death he fell into ill fortune. Cecil, his former friend and associate, completely poisoned James' mind against him ; the plot in favour of Arabella Stuart was discovered, and Raleigh was arrested on the charge of conspiracy. He was tried at Winchester in September, 1603, and found guilty of high treason. The King of Spain, enraged by Raleigh's attack on the Island of St. Thomas, strongly urged upon King James the necessity of bringing about his execution, and Raleigh was brought up before the Court of King's Bench to receive sentence, and was beheaded the next morning, October 29th, 1618.

His memory is still preserved in Sherborne Park, where a spot is gravely pointed out where a servant threw water over him to quench the fire supposed to be blazing, while he was smoking a pipe of tobacco. But as many other places display the same locality, it of course remains with us as a pleasing legend, and all in keeping with his romantic life and character.

XVIII.

JOHN MILTON.

BORN A.D. 1608—DIED A.D. 1674.

JOHN MILTON, the father of our great poet and historian, though a scrivener, or banker, by profession, was a voluminous composer, and equal in science, if not in genius, to the best musicians of his age. His son celebrated his musical abilities in a Latin poem, “*Ad Patrem*,” when attending to his father’s musical science. He says that Apollo had divided his favours between them, giving music to the father, and poetry to the son.

His effusions of gratitude for the education he had received from his parent’s bounty, and his apology for cultivating poetry, contain ideas both beautiful and sublime.

The subject of this present article, John Milton, was born in Bread Street, London, on the 9th of December, 1608. His promise of future excellence was made at a very early period. Every

incitement to exertion, and every mode of instruction adapted to the disposition and powers of the child were employed, and no means were omitted to expand the intellectual powers of the child into the full dimensions of that mental amplitude for which he was destined. Of himself, at this period, he gives the following account :—

“ My father destined me, when I was quite a little boy, to the study of elegant literature, and so eagerly did I seize it, that from my twelfth year, I seldom quitted my studies for my bed till the middle of the night ; this proved the first cause of the ruin of my eyes, in addition to the weakness of which, I was afflicted with frequent pains in my head. When these maladies could not restrain my rage for learning, my father provided that I should be daily instructed in some school abroad, or by tutors at home.”

Some part of this tuition fell to the lot of Dr. Thomas Young, a Puritan minister. About the age of sixteen he was sent to St. Paul’s School, under the presidency of Dr. Gill, and began to distinguish himself by his intense application to study and his poetical talents. So ardent was he of study, that he was regardless of pleasure, and even of health, when they came into competition with the prevailing passion of his soul, and we are consequently not

surprised at the extraordinary brilliant results which soon flashed upon the world. At this early period he imbibed the spirit of devotion which actuated his life.

"What God may have determined for me, I know not, but this I know, that if He ever instilled love of moral beauty into the breast of any man, He has instilled it into mine." Thus he wrote to Charles Diodati in 1637. These sayings came from his heart, and give a clue to his life and work.

On the 12th of February, 1624, he was entered a pensioner at Christ's College, Cambridge, under the tuition of Mr. Chappell; and Dr. Peile, Master of Christ's College, in his Biographical Register of the College, states with reference to Milton, that he was "the greatest man who ever lived in this College." He took the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1629, and Master of Arts in 1632, when he left the University. In the seven years of his academical life his vigorous and ardent genius broke out in frequent flashes.

Milton's life, like that of Dryden and others, divides itself into three periods, and the varying character of his writings in the three periods, shows how greatly his political and other connections affected his literary work. Up to 1638 is the period

of the minor poems. From 1639 to 1660 is that of the prose works and the sonnets. From 1660 to his death, that of the major poems.

The noteworthy poems of the year before 1639 are "*L'allegro*," "*Il Penseroso*," "*Comus*," and "*Lycidas*." The two first stand in a class by themselves in our literature. There is nothing like them before Milton; there is nothing fit to compare with them since his day. The beauty of the matter is almost surpassed by the technical excellencies of the manner. "*They satisfy the critic, and they delight mankind,*" and that is certainly the lot of very few poems.

In "*Comus*," Milton produced what is not only incomparably the finest masque ever written, but also among the greatest of his works.

In "*Lycidas*," the beautiful elegy, written under the form of a pastoral, in memory of his college friend, Edward King, Milton speaks sternly of the corruptions of the Church, in words which find a fit place in the mouth of one who was to bid farewell for twenty years to masque, and pastoral, and idyll, and betake himself to stern political conflict, to controversy and struggle.

In 1638, having obtained the consent of his father to improve himself by foreign travel, Milton set out for the Continent. At Paris he was received

with distinction by Lord Scudamoor, the Ambassador from England, by whom he was introduced to the notice of the illustrious Grotius, who then resided in the French capital as the Minister of Christina, the Queen of Spain.

After a few days' delay at Paris, he renewed his progress, and pursued the direct road to Nice, where a vessel received him and landed him at Genoa. From this city he passed immediately through Leghorn and Pisa to Florence, and on the banks of the Arno he made his first pause. Here he resided two months. He obtained admission into those private academies instituted by the Medici for the advancement of literature, where he enjoyed the friendship of all the deeply learned men of Italy. During the visit to Florence he saw and conversed with the great Galileo, that memorable victim of priestly ignorance and superstition. "There it was," says Milton, "that I found and visited the famous Galileo grown old, a prisoner of the Inquisition, for thinking in astronomy otherwise than the Franciscan and Dominican licensers thought."

On leaving Florence, he proceeded to Rome. It was here that he was struck with Leonora Baroni, whom he celebrated in his Italian sonnets. While making preparation for the remaining part of his travels, he received letters from England, acquaint-

ing him with the distracted state of the country, and with the near prospect of a civil war.

"As I was desirous," he says, "to pass into Sicily and Greece, the melancholy intelligence from England of the civil war recalled me, for I esteemed it dishonourable for me to be lingering abroad even for the improvement of my mind, when my fellow citizens were contending for their liberty at home."

Nevertheless, he spent two months at Rome, and two months at Florence, a month at Venice, then pursued his returning course through Verona and Milan, and over the Alps to Geneva, where he made the acquaintance of two learned divines, John Deodati and Frederic Spanheim, and passing through France, came back to England, having been absent about fifteen months. On his arrival he found the civil commotions of his country hastening to a crisis, and as he had expressed impatience to be present at the theatre of these disputes, it has been thought extraordinary that he did not instantly take upon himself some active part. But his tastes and habits were altogether literary, and he had long pondered upon some subject of English poetry worthy of his genius and capable of being made a passport to the immortality to which he aspired. For a time he undertook the education of his sister's sons of the name of Philips; to these were added

children of parents who desired his tuition. He took a house in Aldersgate Street, and opened an academy for board and education, and so became a schoolmaster.

He performed the duties of instruction with ability, and set an example of hard work and spare diet to his pupils, whom he disciplined with the severity of old times.

Milton did not very long continue inactive in the public cause, and his principles made it no matter of doubt which side he should espouse in the contentions of his country. Conscious of his own proper strength, and sensible that genius, armed with knowledge, was a power far greater than the bodily force of any individual, he accordingly decided in favour of the pen against the sword, and then stationed himself in his study, where he was himself a host, rather than in the field where every muscular private man would have been his superior.

In the year 1641 he published four treatises relative to Church government, in which he attacked episcopacy, and supported the cause of the Puritans.

These were followed by another in the next year, relative to the same controversy, and he reckoned among his antagonists such men as Bishop Hall and Archbishop Usher. His father, who had been

molested in his residence by the King's troops, came to live with him, and spent his later years in tranquility.

Milton married, in 1643, Mary, daughter of Richard Powell, Esq., a magistrate in Oxfordshire. This was a very unsuitable connection, for the father-in-law was a zealous Royalist, and the daughter had been accustomed to the jovial hospitality of the country gentlemen of that party. After a month's experience of her new life, the lady sighed for the gaieties which she had lost, and, obtaining permission, by the earnest request of her relations, for a short absence, she revisited her native place. Here she continued during the remainder of the summer, nor could the letters, messages, and remonstrances of her husband bring her back.

Incensed at her neglect and ill-treatment of him, he began to consider her conduct as a desertion of the nuptial contract, and resolved to punish her by repudiation. He soon found arguments to justify it to the world, and he published, in 1664, "The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce," which was followed by "The Judgment of Martin Bucer concerning Divorce." By these writings, the fury of the Presbyterian clergy was kindled, and they caused the author to be summoned before the House

of Lords, but that body did not care to enter into the question, and soon dismissed him. The Presbyterians were not left without some consolation for the loss of their able friend, for Milton now was irrevocably alienated from their cause.

On the subject of divorce, he makes out a strong case, and appeals to the whole tenor of the Scriptures, the laws of the first Christian Emperors, the opinions of the most eminent of the early reformers, and endeavours to show by the laws of God, and by the inferences of the most virtuous and enlightened men, that the power of divorce ought not to be rigidly restricted to those causes which render the nuptial state unfruitful, or which taint it with spurious offspring.

Milton, in conformity with his theory, resolved to act upon it, and began to pay his addresses to a young lady of great accomplishments, the daughter of Dr. Davies. This brought the wife back again, and the reconciliation was lasting and sincere, and Milton nobly sealed it by opening his house to her father and brothers when they had been driven from home by the triumph of the Republican arms. Milton was now obliged to take a larger house, and he removed to the Barbican. Under pressure of these domestic embarrassments, and of the public interest, the intellect of Milton, obedient

to a heart actuated by the purest benevolence, was busy in promoting the welfare of the human race.

In the year 1644 he imparted to the world his ideas on the subject of education, and defended with a power which has never been exceeded, that guardian of liberty and truth, the freedom of the Press. His "Tractate on Education," addressed to Mr. Hartib, the friend of Sir William Petty, contains his thoughts on that important subject. This was written in an easier and purer style than the other works.

We may remark that in writing prose Milton was never at his best ; it was, as he confessed, "writing with his left hand," and the sentences are often inordinately long.

Soon after the death of King Charles I. he was appointed Latin Secretary to Cromwell. In 1649 he published a work entitled, "The Tenures of Kings and Magistrates," and afterwards employed himself in composing "A History of Britain ; that part especially, now called England," from the earliest period. Of this he wrote six books, but left the work unfinished.

As Latin Secretary to the Council of State, Milton was summoned by the Government to write an answer to the famous royal work, as it was supposed to be,

entitled "Eikon Basilike," or the portraiture of his sacred majesty in his solitudes and sufferings.

Milton chose for the title of his work, "Eikonoklastes," or image-breaker. This may be regarded as one of the most perfect and powerful of Milton's controversial compositions.

This work was answered in 1651 in a work entitled "Eikonaklastos," or the image unbroken, and also forty years afterwards in another piece called "Vindiciæ Carolinæ." "Eikon Basilike" was erroneously imputed to be the work of King Charles I. It was really written by Gauden, Rector of Brightwell (afterwards Bishop of Worcester). This has been satisfactorily proved by the assertions of the two sons of the King, namely, Charles II. and James II., by letters of the Lord Chancellor Hyde, Dr. Gauden himself, and by the specific depositions of the doctor's friend, Dr. Walker, and of his widow.

Scarcely had Milton finished his reply to "Eikon Basilike," than he was called upon to justify the principles of the Commonwealth of England, in opposition to Salmasius, an honorary professor in the University of Leyden, who had been hired by Charles II. to write a work in favour of the royal cause, which he entitled "Defensio Regia."

Salmasius was by far a more powerful antagonist

than Dr. Gauden, and the contest was to be decided in a more ample field than that in which Milton had engaged with the "Eikon Basilike." The powers of his mind were now to be exhibited to Europe, and the whole circle of the civilised and Christian Community was to witness the issue.

In 1651 he performed the task allotted to him in a work under the title of "Defensio secunda pro Populo Anglicano," in which he exercised all the powers of Latin rhetoric to justify the Republican party, as well as to confound and villify the celebrated scholar against whom he took up his pen.

One source of triumph arose to Milton's enemies. In consequence of the controversy, his intense application to study deprived him of that sight which had been for some years declining. His physicians had warned him that the exertions necessary to accomplish such a work would probably induce blindness; but his attachment to the public cause of his country and the world, made him unduly submit to any privations which were merely personal. "I determined," he says, "to dedicate the short enjoyment of my eyesight, with as much effect as I could, to the public advantage." In 1652 he lost his wife, and his blindness induced him to marry again, but his second wife died within a year, greatly regretted by her husband. Employment

was his resource against the gloom of his condition, and after he had concluded his controversial warfare, he took up his suspended "History of Britain," which he carried to the Conquest.

It was unfortunate that Milton put off until so late in life his task of writing his history, as it was not begun until 1670, only four years before his death, and consequently it fails on account of its incompleteness. Like all scholars, Milton was indebted for his information to Tacitus, Suetonius, Pliny, and, of course, Cæsar. Writing this history from the earliest times, and having only such imperfect works of English writers as the "Triads," "Gildas," and Bede, it was only to be expected that Milton should rely almost entirely on the pen of the Romans for anything like reliable information, and, imbued as Milton was with classical literature, it was a familiar element for him to make his researches. If feeble health and blindness could have daunted any man for such an enterprise, Milton would have had reason to count the cost, but his literary labours were always maintained with unabated vigour, whatever may have been the impediment, and when we reflect that in the following year after the commencement of his herculean task of writing his history, he gave to the world two poems, "Paradise Regained," and

"Samson Agonistes," we are not surprised at the incompleteness of his task.

There is always a vast interval between the classical scholar and the political philosopher, and if we add to this the poetic mind and the love of romance that fills the brain of the inspired genius, whose imagination is ever at work, bringing forms and shapes out of a distant past, so full of fable and so alluring to the creative mind, where light breaks in even the darkest corners, we cannot help feeling in his writings on such a vast subject that much of his matter consists of phantoms, but such phantoms that take the shape and probabilities of existence ; that, like Tennyson's ideals, we are carried away with the charm and we care not whether they are real characters or had a real existence. We are satisfied that they bring before us an atmosphere that we know to be real, and so more than in plain relation of fact we become imbued with a sense of the reality that is like an illumination. We can never read any of Milton's writings without catching a glimpse of the gorgeous panoply with which he bedecks his characters. There is nothing that his imagination does not triumph over. So intense and ardent was the fire of his mind that the very pages glowed with life and reality, and the very versatility of Milton, the harmony of his passages,

the richness of his imagery, the beauty of his language, his fine sympathy with all that was lovely and delightful, must ever win the reader, whether the matter be on debateable ground or not. .

As a prose writer, Milton was a master, as he was beyond everything the master of poetry ; but his history has, for the most part, been neglected, and remained unread by all except scholars and lovers of the curious, for curious they undoubtedly are—and their style is strangely out of keeping with the taste of the present day. It by no means follows, however, that this is the fault of the writers themselves, for modern English prose will hardly compare favourably with the grander and more elaborate style of the old masters, and it may be that a future generation will honour Milton the great thinker, the fervid controversialist, and the writer of a lofty, rhythmical and impassioned prose, as well as the poet of unquestioned eminence. Milton once thought of choosing for his Epic this period of history, and there is little question that his mind was fascinated by the subject.

The laws of Ethelbert, regulating the administration of justice, though formed on the Roman jurisprudence, were yet framed so as not to abolish national notions of equity. The genius of Alfred, who, in spite of all difficulties, managed to surmount

the obstacles that the degeneracy of the times presented when the pursuits of literature were objects of contempt. Alfred's perseverance in unlocking those treasures of history and science locked up in the security of a learned language ; his deep, religious sentiments, his thoroughness in maintaining the strife against the Danes ; his industry in creating fortifications, and, above all, in improving, if not in creating, the Navy. The administration of the laws, and the strictness with which they were enacted, all drew the admiration and approval of the poet historian ; while the feebleness and everlasting infamy of Ethelred, who planned the massacre executed on the festival of St. Brice, and the swift retribution that followed, by the invasion of Sweyn, the mild and wise ruler of Canute ; the feebleness of Edward the Confessor, although somewhat redeemed by many admirable laws ; and then the master hand of William, putting an end to a darkened period of rebellion, invasion, and strife. These were all in his mind, and were contrasted as parallels with the scene of strife during which his life had been passed, and which left behind so many episodes of valour in the cause of freedom, caused Milton to seek for his idol, liberty, in the throes of warfare, and changes of dynasties—if such they may be called

that signalised the early years of the British Constitution.

After the death of Cromwell, when the fluctuations of government threatened general anarchy, he was induced to give his advice on civil and ecclesiastical topics, and he wrote "A Ready and easy way to establish a Free Commonwealth."

The King, however, returned in triumph, and Milton was discharged from his office, and for a time lay concealed in the house of a friend in St. Bartholomew's Close, near Smithfield. Milton's life was probably preserved through the intervention of William Davenant, who had himself been indebted to the mediation of Milton; but his books—"Eikonoklastes" and "Defence of the People"—were ordered to be burnt by the common hangman. Now reduced in circumstances and under the displeasure of the powers, Milton removed to a private habitation. But scarcely had he left his concealment when he was taken into custody by an order of the House of Commons, from which he was dismissed by paying his fees.

While living in Jewin Street he married his third wife, Elizabeth Minshull, the daughter of a gentleman in Cheshire.

Undisturbed, his powerful mind conceived the idea of his greatest work, "Paradise Lost." Milton

is the poet of "Paradise Lost," as Spenser is of the "Færie Queen." Without "Paradise Lost," Milton would only have been a magnificent poet of unfulfilled promise.

Dictating to whosoever might be handy to write it down, the sheets were perused in sheets of ten, twenty, or thirty verses at a time, by his nephew Philips. This gentleman tells us that the vein of Milton's poetical skill never happily flowed but from the autumnal equinox to the vernal, and that whatever he attempted at other times was not to his satisfaction. "Paradise Lost" was first published in 1667, in ten books, and Milton received from the publisher five pounds for the copyright, with a contingency of ten pounds more.

In 1671 Milton published his "Paradise Regained," written upon the suggestion of his friend Ellwood, who, on having read "Paradise Lost" in manuscript, and being asked by the author how he liked it, answered in his quaint way, "Thou hast said much here on Paradise Lost, but what hast thou to say about Paradise Found?"

When the latter poem was finished, Milton put it into the hands of Ellwood, saying in a pleasant tone, "This is owing to you, for you put it into my head by the question you put to me at Chalfont."

Macaulay tells us that Milton's fondness and

preference for this poem was certainly not justified. At the same time this was published there appeared the Tragedy of Samson Agonistes, composed upon the ancient model, but it was never intended for the stage. Macaulay says : “ Milton did not strictly belong to any of the classes which were then existing. He was not a Puritan ; he was not a free-thinker ; he was not a Royalist. In his character the noblest qualities of every party were combined in harmonious union. From the Parliament and the Court ; from the Conventicle and from the Gothic Cloister ; from the gloomy and sepulchral Circles of the Roundheads ; and from the Christmas revel of the hospitable Cavalier, his nature selected and drew to itself whatever was great and good, while it rejected all the base and pernicious ingredients by which those finer elements were defiled. Like the Puritans he lives ‘ as ever in his great taskmaster’s eye.’ Like them, he kept his mind continually fixed on an Almighty judge and an Eternal reward, and hence he acquired their contempt of external circumstances, their fortitude, their tranquility, their inflexible resolution. But not the coolest sceptic, or the most profane scoffer was more perfectly free from the contagion of their frantic delusions, their savage manners, their ludicrous jargon, their scorn of science, and their aversion

to pleasure. Hating tyranny with a perfect hatred, he had nevertheless all the estimable and ornamental qualities which are always almost entirely monopolized by the party of the tyrant. There was none who had a stronger sense of the value of literature, a finer relish for every elegant amusement, or a more chivalrous delicacy of honour and love. Though his opinions were democratic, his tastes and associations were such as harmonized best with Monarchy and Aristocracy."

In speaking of Milton's prose writings, Macaulay says : " It is to be regretted that the prose writings of Milton should in our time be so little read. As compositions they deserve the attention of every man who wishes to become acquainted with the full power of the English language. They abound with passages compared with which the finest declarations of Burke sink into insignificance. They are a perfect field of cloth of gold. The style is stiff with gorgeous embroidery. Not even in the earlier books of the *Paradise Lost* has the great poet risen higher than in those parts of his controversial works in which his feelings, excited by conflict, find a vent in bursts of devotional and lyric rapture. It is, to borrow his own majestic language, ' a sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies.' "

Towards the close of the year 1823 the deputy keeper of the State papers, in the course of his researches among the presses of his office, met with a large Latin manuscript. With it were corrected copies of the foreign dispatches written by Milton while he filled the office of Secretary, and several papers relating to the Popish trials, and the Rye House Plot. The whole were wrapped up in an envelope addressed to Mr. Skinner, Merchant. On examination, the larger manuscript proved to be the long lost Essay on the Doctrines of Christianity, which Milton is said to have finished after the Restoration and deposited with Cyriac Skinner. Skinner, it is well known, held the same political opinions as his illustrious friend. It is therefore probable, as the deputy keeper conjectures, that he may have fallen under the suspicions of the Government during the dissolution of the Oxford Parliament, and that, in consequence of the seizure of his papers, this work may have been brought to the office in which it has been found. But whatever the adventures of the manuscript may have been, no doubt can exist that it is a genuine relic of the great poet.

XIX.

MONTESQUIEU.

BORN A.D. 1689—DIED A.D. 1755.

CHARLES DE SECONDAT MONTESQUIEU was born in 1689 at the Château de la Brède, near Bordeaux; the author of “Physical History of the Ancient and Modern World.”

He was elected a Member of the French Academy, and shortly afterwards set out on an extensive course of travels, devoting two years solely to England, for which country, and especially for its laws, he conceived great admiration. Then, on return to France, he spent two years in studious retirement—the result of which was the issue of two great works :

1. “The Greatness and Decline of the Romans.”
2. “Esprit des Lois.”

This latter book, which deals with the surrounding circumstances, climate, territory, etc., upon laws and customs, and reasons out the best mode of

government from those considerations, is a philosophical way of dealing with the very difficult problem of reconciling what we are sometimes disposed to regard the inconsistencies and want of statesmanship which regulate laws in other countries, and which would never work in our own. We have to go into those countries to live, to be in contact with the characteristics of the people, to understand the past history which has moulded them into a particular mode of thought, habit of life; and, to understand how the political and geographical position of the country has contributed to their particular habit of life; what their ancestors had been, what race they sprang from, and to get a clue to those peculiarities of temperament that call for special legislation, to enable them to comply with cheerfulness to its legislation.

With regard to climate, every observer can see that there is produced by the very nature of the case, less exertion to procure the necessaries of life in the torrid zone than there is in the hardy North. If we take England, even, and Scotland, what makes the Scotch people so far ahead of the English people in business matters, but the rugged nature of the country, and the more severe nature of the climate, the greater difficulty of securing harvests, calling for greater painstaking, prudence, patience, and

economy. To get on at all, a Scotchman must be better educated, be more strict in habits, more industrious than those over the border. They live in different environment to ours, and we in our turn live in an environment just as different as those people in Europe, who are blessed with more sunshine. A native of the West coast of Africa can go and pick his food off the bushes in the forest, and go without clothes, and consequently the matter of food and clothing is hardly a matter of consideration. Laws for such an one must necessarily be totally different to those which would suit our Constitution.

And it was to explain these manifest differences that Montesquieu wrote "*Esprit des Loïs*," creating a political science, not so much new, as overlooked. He came to the conclusion that Germany was the place to travel in, Italy to reside in for a time, England to think in, and France to live in. The book, however, was considered as the making of an epoch in government. Montesquieu must be held the greatest Frenchman in literature of the eighteenth century.

When a nobleman of considerable fortune leaves his castle and family estate, and takes to travel in order that he may investigate nature, and is so consumed with passion for working out a new scheme

of literature, that he spends twenty laborious years in elaborating a philosophical work, which weighs the merits of all the different forms of government, and investigates and analyzes the characteristics of the people, the conditions under which they live, the climate of the countries in which they dwell, the traditions of the past which sculptures its impress upon the national mind, and forges a stamp of thought, and mode of action ; and, then from these premises shows to us the laws which emanate from these data, we are called upon to respect and even venerate a historian who can have no selfish motive, no partisan spirit, which instinctively sets to work to whitewash one side and blacken the other. And, in the case of Montesquieu, unlike so many great men, we have not to shut our eyes to the private life of the man, and to feel that an infamous morality sullied and poisoned the mind as it assuredly does, and so passed on to us some of the poison of a vitiated intellect, for the same fountain cannot send forth bitter waters without fouling the stream, and, although we exercise charity to its very limits, and in our tenderness, and love, and regard for the author, such as we might feel for other authors. With the works of Montesquieu we have no such drawbacks. A nobleman, a gentleman, one of

whom we can write “*Sinecera*,” his eloquence might have been less copious, less florid ; but, it was far purer, much more manly than that of his compeers. It was put forth with a singleness of purpose, which neither the consideration of money, so often the bane of the historian, nor the childish love of applause and fame, nor the ostentatious display of aristocratic position, which he might have assumed, could ever corrupt.

The age in which Montesquieu flourished was one in which a wave of infidelity was spreading its poisonous seed, that was to reap such a disastrous harvest of revolution and bloodshed.

The writings of Voltaire and Rousseau might assume the air of virtue and modesty, and decorum might be paraded ; but the whole thing was a sham, and the practise of all ungodliness was universal. Under the auspices of Madame Dubarry and the butcher’s daughter, Madame de Pompadour, all pretence of decency and religion were given up. That such a character as Montesquieu, with all his advantages of rank and wealth could have escaped this universal contagion, argues a pure and eminent mind, that like the sun, rises triumphant from the mists, and even by its brilliancy disperses them.

To compare Voltaire, the superficial, with a noble like Montesquieu, is to degrade human nature

at its best, and to do honour to a writer of utter artificiality, and a man of infamous life. Montesquieu, like the philosophers of old, distinguished himself by advancing theories and doctrines of his own acquirement, the other French writers of the times were the mere exponents of public opinion, and merely set forth in telling language the floating ideas and generally diffused feelings of a dissolute people.

In the previous century, Descartes the Frenchman, Leibintz the German, Locke the Englishman, left honest works behind them, however much they might be in error. But writers of this age, however brilliant, can never attain an honourable position as one who did good to his country, or shed a lasting lustre on its fame. His talents may secure him from contempt, and his wit win him friends, but none would choose him for an associate, or value him as a friend.

Montesquieu has a depth and originality to which a mere writer of the times, and an exponent of a vicious social state could never attain. His Persian letters are highly esteemed for their wit, pleasantry, and independent spirit, and in these he even rivals Voltaire in persiflage and gay, witty treatment. There is always in the writings of Montesquieu, in his liveliest vein, an indication of

a noble mind, and an elevation of character that scorns the base even to amuse. Refinement is the keynote of the nobleman ; satire and a desire for popularity was the essence of the others.

Montesquieu's "Cause of the Greatness and Decline of Rome," is a work replete with the most acute observations, and is written in a fine, nervous style, carrying the reader on with sustained interest, and bringing his deductions to bear on the burning questions of public constitution and legislation. We cannot understand Montesquieu's motive until we realise that, after the Treaty of Paris, an unusual activity characterised the period of examination into different governments, and regulating internal administrations in accordance with the best model.

Systems of political economy occupied the pens of eminent writers, while religion, morals, and education became the topics of philosophical speculation. Under such circumstances, public opinion, guided by such writers as Voltaire, Montesquieu, Rousseau, D'Alembert and others, assumed an unusual importance ; and those institutions against which it raised its voice were either annihilated or lingered out a precarious existence.

XX.

VOLTAIRE.

BORN A.D. 1694—DIED A.D. 1778.

THE name of this writer was really Francois Maria Aronet. In early life he was confined in the Bastille for some satires against the Duke of Orleans, and on his release from prison he assumed the name of Voltaire, from a small property left him by his mother. It will help us to understand the hostile attitude to all religion by such writers—and they were numerous at this time in our country and many others—to point out that the suppression of the Jesuits was effected. Various causes, undoubtedly, contributed to their fall, but to the effects of the philosophical tendency of the age must be attributed their decline. From these writings it was demonstrated that their institution was contradictory to the spirit of the age, and hence it was observed that their most determined opponents were always found in the very country where the order had reached its highest perfection.

Their first collision took place with the Portuguese Minister, Pombal.

They had been implicated in the attempt to assassinate the King, proscribed as traitors and disturbers of public peace, they were deprived of their possessions, and were banished from the kingdom in 1759. Their next antagonist was the French Minister, Choiseul. A spirit of opposition rose in France, the Parliament assumed an unusual tone of independence, and was permitted by Louis XV., in 1762, to limit ecclesiastical tyranny, and to abolish the Society of Jesuits in that kingdom. These examples were followed in 1767 by the Spanish Cabinet, Charles II. and his Minister, Count d'Aranda, considering the order as hostile to all existing governments, adopted the most summary means of removing them from Spain and its Colonies. They were seized in Mexico and Peru, where they had established an almost independent empire. They were suddenly deposed and transported to Europe. In the following year they were expelled from Naples and from Parma in defiance of the earnest remonstrance of Pope Clement XIII., who now found himself opposed to almost all Italy, and to the leading Powers of Western Europe. Eventually the fraternity was abolished in 1773 by Ganganielli, at that time Pope

Clement XIV. Little wonder that Voltaire shared the disgust that animated every Frenchman against Cardinal Mazarin. His philosophical letters were so outrageous, that they were burnt by the authorities of Paris for their infidel tendencies. Strange that a man who professed to be a fearer of God, should yet be in reality an infidel !

An instance of the flippancy of his remarks is taken from a kind of diary of his recently discovered : "A Jew serves God standing up with his hat on, a Quaker similarly presents himself before the Almighty, only in silence, and your ritualist crawls and prostrates his body, and fancies himself by these means to be qualifying for the Kingdom of Heaven." He was frequently obliged to leave Paris because his free notions and biting satires offended those in power. On one occasion he came to London, where he was received with unbounded welcome. It was a time when infidel notions were promulgated by such writers as Lord Bolingbroke, and the scurrilous Tom Paine. One incident of this visit is worth recording. He paid a visit to the poet Congreve, who said he could not receive him unless it was a visit to a private gentleman. "If you were only a private gentleman," was the conceited reply, "I should never have come to pay you this visit." He also made the acquaint-

ance of Lord Bolingbroke, whom he spoke of as being a transparent, open character ; and, beyond doubt, they suited each other.

But whatever opinion we may have of Voltaire as a philosopher, there is no doubt that his " Siecle de Louis XIV.," in point of composition, is one of the masterpieces of modern literature, and that no work, perhaps, can be more looked upon as a model of the best qualities of the French language. The work was published in 1752, and previous to that he had detailed the peculiarities of a prince (" Histoire de Charles XII."). Indeed, in the introduction of the work, he announced his intention to describe, not the actions of a single man, but the characters of men. Nor in this point of view is the execution inferior to the design. While he is contented with giving a summary of military achievements, he enters at length into those really important matters which, before his time, found no place in the history of France. M. Nisard writes : " De toutes les inspiratione de Voltaire."

As a writer of history, Voltaire is inimitable in giving a bird's-eye view of a subject, but he is not infrequently incorrect, and this is more noticeable in his essay on General History. This work had an immense superiority over the narrow views of Bousset (" Discours Sur l'histoire universelle "),

but it cannot be denied that we find in both these works prejudices from which it is difficult for a Frenchman educated in the reign of Louis XIV. to be entirely free.

Voltaire had a summary way of treating much of history, and was fond of generalising and inserting allusions, which, sometimes creates a difficulty, if not a vagueness very perplexing to the reader who is faced with an enigma and is troubled to find the key. Perhaps it is well to give the periods of the reign of Louis XIV., the longest of all the periods of Europe, that is, seventy-two years, 1643-1715. There was the period of his minority, Voltaire tells us, which may be described as a period of turbulence and disorder. There was the period of his prime, a period of surpassing splendour. Under Colbert, the finances were fabously increased; under Conde, Turenne, and Vauban, and the King himself, the army was everywhere victorious.

There was the period of triumph—the navy, the fortifications, naval ports, grand edifices in Paris, arts encouraged and flourishing.

And there was the period of old age, a period of decrepitude, over-luxuriousness. France was broken down by the victories of Marlborough, and the army became dissolute; luxury corrupted everyone, and the court was “A cage of unclean birds.” The evil

genius of this first period was Cardinal Mazarin. The King was only five years old ; the Queen Mother was appointed Regent, and under the influence of Mazarin—indeed, she was said to be married to him ! Both were foreigners, both disliked, and, it was through Mazarin that the war with Spain, and the rebellion called the Fronde War occurred.

The death of Richelieu brought France into a state of weakness and anarchy ; the guiding hand was gone ; the Nobles were turbulent and insolent, the people took advantage of the times to vindicate their liberty. The Duc d'Enghien, afterwards the Great Condé, rescued the country from ruin by his brilliant victories.

At Rocroy, in Flanders, called the battle of the giants, Condé cut in pieces the redoubtable Spanish infantry, hitherto considered invincible.

At Freiburg, a battle lasting three days in the Grand Duchy of Baden-Nordlingen, in Bavaria. At Lens, he overwhelmed Leopold, brother of the Emperor of Germany. All these brilliant deeds were marred by the administration of Mazarin—a greedy, mean, and miserly man ; a man who kept the young King in so destitute a condition that everyone cried shame on him ; and who, finally, plunged the country into civil war by a foolish and arbitrary measure called

‘L’arrat d’union (1648), by which he tried to suppress the hereditary right of magistrates. This was answered by the Paris lawyers by passing the Act of Union, and, despite Mazarin’s opposition, presented to Parliament twenty-seven Articles, abolishing monopolies, reduction of imposts (Mazarin was overwhelming the people with imposts), prohibiting to impose taxes without authority of the State’s General, no arrests without assigning a cause, prisoners to be tried within a given time.

These Articles were looked upon by the court party as subversive of royalty, and by the people as the foundation of liberty, hence the division—Mazarinians, Frondeurs. The King was now ten years old, and went to preside at the Parliament. Two opponents appeared, Blancmisnil and Broussel. The mob took up the cry, “Broussel for ever,” “Down with Mazarin.” Broussel was arrested, and this excited the city to madness. The streets were barricaded, and gangs paraded them, wearing as a badge a wisp of straw, shouting “Broussel for ever.” Condé was sent to quell the rebels, the court fled to St. Germain.

For five years the war of the Fronde continued, and at last was brought to a conclusion by Condé, who took the part of the Frondeurs, gaining a victory over the great General Turenne who, like Condé,

had changed sides. Mazarin was dismissed, but afterwards re-established as despotic, as frivolous, as avaricious, and mean as ever.

Voltaire could not help comparing Mazarin with our Cromwell. Voltaire says that Mazarin and Don Louis vied with one another in lavishing their diplomatic arts to get into touch with the Protector.

On the death of Mazarin, the King, now twenty-two years old, called his ministers together, and thus addressed them : “ Gentlemen, as long as the Cardinal lived, I allowed him to govern my affairs, but henceforth, I intend to govern them myself.” He kept his ministers under the strictest control, and devoted his time to business with unwearied assiduity.

Colbert was made Minister of Finance, Turenne Commander-in-Chief of the Army. Condé succeeded Turenne at his death.

Colbert’s administration raised the country to the highest pitch of prosperity—a great financier and a great reformer. He established and revived manufactures, facilitated commerce by creating “ Vents,” or marts, and formed a vast fleet ; improved the Civil Code, and encouraged the arts and sciences. With Colbert, the glory of this long reign began, and with it ended. Colbert was a small, vulgar-looking man, with small black eyes, and

coarse, black hair, and was fifteen years older than the King.

Having given a brief sketch of Voltaire's great work, Voltaire himself demands attention. We leave behind the most fascinating of all his studies, for beyond doubt the period of Louis XIV. dominated his life, as the previous history of France saddened him. Nor can we wonder when he knew well that senseless folly, neglect, corruption, had brought his country into such a state.

Paris he describes as infested with brigands, and its streets full of unpleasant odours, a few police, and those not attempting to promote order. As a bird's-eye view, this is an admirable sketch. Well might Voltaire be styled The Great Pan, and Dictator of Letters ! For vividness of description, for clearness of view, for vivacity and charm of style, Voltaire has no equal in any literature. His name fills the eighteenth century, and never has it been given to man to exercise a wider influence at a time when such influence was sorely needed. France wanted to be told blunt truths. Voltaire's tragedies in the opinion of most cities of Europe are equal if not superior to those of Corneille and Racine. "Oedipus" is his best, and "Zaire" is the most pathetic drama in the language. "Alzire," "Mahomet," and "Merope," are all of sterling merit.

The last is without any intermixture of love—a circumstance hitherto unprecedented on the French stage. His “*Henriade*” is the best epic of the language, contains a good deal of striking description, and is written in harmonious verse. As a writer of tales and light poetry, he has no superior; his language is a model of elegance and good taste.

As a man, he was a medley of good and bad qualities; urbane yet irascible; vindictive, but generous; democratic, yet a flatterer of the great; timid, yet daring; simple in his tastes, but vain beyond all limits, and most exacting of respect; a fearer of God, yet an infidel; suave in manners, but dreadfully sarcastic.

He lived for fifteen years with Marchioness du Châtelet, at Cirey, in Lorraine, and there he composed his best works. Marchioness du Châtelet was a lady of fortune, the wife of a Marquis, and intensely interested in the works of Newton.

Voltaire was invited to the palace of Frederic of Prussia, but his vanity and arrogance was so offensive that the King could not tolerate him. Soon after he left Prussia he went to Ferney, a little desert village near Geneva, and here he lived in retirement, and from this obscure retreat he poured forth his invectives against the government, the

Church, nobles, nuns, priests, and indeed, all classes of men.

Towards the end of his life, he returned again to Paris, was admitted a member of the Academy, and almost idolized.

He now lived in great state, and dressed in a full suit of purple velvet embroidered with gold ; wrought stockings with silver clocks ; a magnificent sable mantle covered with crimson velvet, the gift of the Empress Catherine ; and shoes with enormous buckles and high heels. He died on the 30th of May, 1778, and was privately buried, as the Archbishop of Paris refused him Christian burial. During the Revolution his remains were moved to Paris. Voltaire has been differently judged. By some he has been overlauded, and overblamed by others. It must be remembered he did not create the feeling which he embodied, but simply availed himself of it. It was because he ran with the crowd that he was so immensely popular. The world was with him, and he knew it. Had he lived at another period his vanity would have drawn him into another path. He wrote for glory, and not for truth ; for popularity and not from conviction.

At the same time, such a work as his "Louis XIV." will always be a most charming study, and a masterpiece of terse diction.

In the Revolution the Girondists were disciples of Voltaire, and the mountain party of Rousseau. Voltaire set up reason as the rule and guide for everything. Whatever could not be squared with human reason he rejected, hence his infidel notions and revolutionary doctrines.

"Nothing we know of Deity can be brought down to the grasp of human reasoning, because the finite cannot span the infinite, and in governments it is utterly repugnant to reason that one man should be born a king, and another a beggar."

Rousseau's theory was a return to the patriarchal state. He professed to hate civilisation, and dreamed of universal brotherhood and the rights of man. Rousseau was painfully jealous of Voltaire, his talents, popularity, honours, and wealth. Like Voltaire he visited London, and in order to attract attention walked about the streets in Armenian costume.

These two men intoxicated France with their infidel and democratic dogmas, and contributed in no little degree to bring about the great Revolution. Rousseau has been styled the melancholy Jaques.

He was a misanthrope, and a recluse of the most morbid sensibilities and unhappy spirit. Like Voltaire, he was excessively vain, and thought the world in league against talent.

All these infidel writers merely show the caprice and imbecility of the human mind in rejecting what has been the consent and tradition of practically the whole of mankind ; they do nothing but create mischief, and unhappiness, and tend in no wise to the edification of mankind.

XXI.

DAVID HUME.

BORN A.D. 1711—DIED A.D. 1776.

RELIGIOUS scepticism in the work of an historian is apparent when he notices—

1. The minds on which its first introduction was brought to hear.
 2. The rapacity of ecclesiastical hierarchy.
 3. The tinted effect religion apparently exercised in subduing the passions of mankind.
1. The minds of converts were of a credulity to invite imposture. They had left the worship of their deities in the forests and wilds, and they brought with them the elementary principles of all barbarous idolatry, namely, a superstitious reverence for the priesthood—a confidence of the efficacy of gifts and sacrifices to expiate offences. It is undeniable that the ministers of religion, not so much by personal covetousness as by the zeal for the interest of their order, took every advantage of

this. Many of the peculiar and prominent characteristics of faith and discipline of those ages, appear to have been introduced or sedulously promoted for the purpose of fraud. To those purposes conspired the veneration of relics, the inviolability of sanctuary, the worship of images, the idolatry of saints and martyrs ; and above all to purgatory and masses for the relief of the dead. A creed like this operating on the minds of barbarians—lavish though rapacious ; and devout, though dissolute—naturally prevailed.

2. And this led to the rapacity of the hierarchy—though it never received any territorial endowments by law, yet the voluntary munificence of princes as well as their subjects, amply supplied a provision. Large private estates, or as they were termed, patrimonies, not only within their own dioceses, but sometimes in distant countries, sustained the dignities of the principal sees, and especially that of Rome. The French monarchs of the first dynasty, the Carlovingian family and their great chiefs, the Saxon line of Emperors, the kings of England, and Leon, set hardly any bounds to their liberality. Prudent management of the estates fairly acquired is always admirable, but these were sources of wealth less pure, donations, and bequests of land as an atonement to heaven

for the sins of individuals ; sales of indulgences, and so on—all these methods shock the mind of the historian.

3. Religion appears to have had no restraining influence on the passions of mankind. “She was of the Crusades,” is an instance of this. No respect for life or property marked the course of the Crusaders as they marched through Europe to the scene of war, depredations, rapine, horrible and untold massacres were laid to their charge. The wars of the Spaniards in the Netherlands, the Inquisition, the brutal massacres of the Huguenots, the devastating wars of Charlemagne, made in the name of religion, created desolated wastes, when neither young nor old, nor any consideration for property was ever shown, and these instances are not exceptions. Now Hume’s attitude to religion is one of respect. It is not right in any way to call him an atheist. He is bitter against priesthood ; but he defines clearly what he opposes, and he remarks as follows : “ By priests I understand only the pretenders to power and dominion, and to a superior sanctity of character distinct from virtue and good morals. These are very different from Clergymen ; there is no rank of men more to be respected than the latter ” (“Essay on Superstition”).

Elsewhere Hume expressly says ("Natural History of Religion") that he holds the existence of God, and that he believes the divine attributes to have some analogy to human intelligence. His position is, indeed, that of an agnostic. He is a believer in God, but he is content to admit that he knows, and at present, can know no more. He even desires (in the same work), that heaven would be pleased to dissipate the profound ignorance by discovery of the nature, attributes, and operations of the divine object of our faith ; and, elsewhere, he asserts "with reasonable men the question can never be concerning the 'Being,' but only the nature of God," and he piously ascribes to Him every species of perfection. We must thus free him from atheism.

The natural bias of Hume's mind towards philosophical reasoning was an obstruction that quite unqualified him for writing history with any high degree of faithfulness. We must regard his knowledge of history as superficial, and written with a strong party feeling which renders the work untrustworthy ; but his history demands respect for the animation and refinement of style, and from the fact that he was one of the first of modern writers of history to perceive the importance of considering the social and literary aspects of national life

as well as its political changes. An historian must not have any bias if he is to be faithful to his subject.

Like all Scottish writers, Hume, when he wished to express himself forcibly, or when he felt bitter, and he was never more bitter than when he was writing his tirades against Laud, his scorn of the "Five Articles of Perth," which that prelate, at the instigation of James I., tried to foist upon the Scotch Kirk, could only be adequately expressed by lapsing into patavinity; and, also his strictures on Charles I. on trying to foist upon the Scotch a liturgy copied from the English, an act which led to the civil war of the Covenanters. These subjects could only be dealt with by the Scottish invectives. His spleen had been bitterly roused by disappointment that his "Treatise on Human Nature" had not been the subject of more controversy and notice, but the fact was, the British public had rather more than they cared for in the scurrilous attacks on Christianity by Tom Paine, the scoffings of Viscount Bolingbroke; and, prejudiced as Hume was against the English and all English matters amounting almost to a frenzy, could not but be a bias to his mind, and plain English language was all too feeble for him to express all he thought.

There is a great difference noticeable in the writings put forth in his youth on philosophical

works. His "Treatises on Human Nature" and an "Inquiry concerning Human Understanding" are models of good English and good logic. Everything here is orderly, and had he confined himself to this subject, one in which he evidently gave the best of his intellect, we should not have had these exhibitions of bad taste. But, unfortunately, he took to history, and chose those periods which were peculiarly bitter to Scotchmen; and, as disappointment at his philosophical books being neglected, it preyed upon his mind, and could only be got rid of by some safety valve, and his "History" supplied that.

Hume's writings on the subject of political economy are few and scanty, but they contained the first principles of the science, and he anticipated, by several years, the more important of the conclusions established and elaborated by Adam Smith. It is as a philosopher that he will be longest remembered, and his conciseness and clearness of reasoning, which may be called Hume's brilliant logic, in pages that have never been refuted, made him the demonstrator of the highest ability, and stamped him as the clearest minded philosopher that ever wrote.

XXII.

WILLIAM ROBERTSON.

BORN A.D. 1721—DIED A.D. 1793.

ROBERTSON'S "History of Scotland" during the reigns of Queen Mary and King James VI. appeared in 1759, and was well received—to such an extent, that it led to his being appointed Chaplain of Stirling Castle in 1759, one of the King's Chaplains in 1761, and Principal of Edinburgh University in 1762. His "History of Charles V." was published in 1769.

When we come to compare Robertson with Macaulay we find that Robertson's history is statuesque, while Macaulay's is picturesque. Perhaps it is paying Robertson a compliment to make this assertion—that in no way can we speak of him as a great historian or a great writer. His works have become obsolete, rendered so by the research of later writers, and his style is, perhaps, too dull to gain the attention of readers, who love literary excellence.

There are some instances in which Robertson employed materials, which were not always authentic. This is especially the case in his "History of America," in which he appears to have taken very little pains to verify the statements that are to be found in his history. So glaring are these faults that the History may be rejected as untrustworthy. And in his "History of Scotland" during the reigns of Mary and King James VI. the bias is so strong that prejudice has too often over-ruled either truth or judgment.

But his "History of America" may be considered to be his best book, because so many of the events occurred during his lifetime, and he had the great advantage of journalism to supply him with material. It is only when we find him wandering in the other periods that we miss the authenticity of his matter.

We are naturally inclined to ask, what were Robertson's views in sympathy and antipathy about Mary, Queen of Scots. As we might expect from the son of a Scotch minister, there is a vast amount of religious prejudice—Mary being Roman Catholic; but, besides the religious aversions, the character of Mary, morally, is open to censure. Her intrigues with Rizzio and Bothwell are too glaring to be passed by without censure. Her plots with the papists

were a constant source of anxiety, but when the Government determined to act against Mary they were not very scrupulous in the honesty of their dealings. A trap was laid to entangle her in a treasonable correspondence, and the affair of Babington, being used as a means of incriminating Mary in a supposed plot to assassinate Queen Elizabeth, was too flimsy a charge for any right judge to give the importance to it that was given at the time by a subservient Government.

XXIII.

EDWARD GIBBON.

BORN A.D. 1737—DIED A.D. 1794.

THE decline and fall of the Roman Empire comprises the history of the world for nearly thirteen centuries, from the reign of the Antonines to the taking of Constantinople by the Turks. It includes also the history of the Church. For this portion Gibbon was attacked as an assailant of the Divine authority of Christianity.

We may place the date A.D. 476 for the extinction of the Roman Empire, 1,224 years from the building of Rome. The Roman Empire owed its dissolution to the extension of its dominions. Had it been a capital crime for any Roman citizen to have proposed to carry the arms of the Republic beyond the limits of Italy, its constitution might have been preserved for many years beyond the period of its actual duration. History has indeed shown that all states evinces there is an inseparable connection

between fair and equitable legislation, and political prosperity and advance, and we have no stronger demonstration of this truth than in the "Annals of the Roman Commonwealth." From the consideration of the Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire, and all other empires, we learn that they all have their period of growth, maturity, and extinction. But although empires have had their period of duration, history, instructing us as to the causes which have produced their decline and downfall, inculcates also the salutary lesson that they are themselves the masters of their destiny.

Rome now gave way to the enervating influence of over-prosperity—combats of gladiators, theatres, baths, reclining on couches, lavish suppers, female dancers, in fact, every folly and excess that money could so easily procure. The Battle of Actium decided the fate of the Commonwealth. We now come to the time of the Emperors,
30 B.C.

The names of Augustus, Titus, Vespasian, Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Marcus Aurelius, Theodosius, and many more belong to the good clan of Emperors. Whilst Nero, Caligula, and Vetellius, may well represent the worst.

Marcus Aurelius' "Meditations" are the best commentary on his precepts. Constantine removed

the government to Constantinople, altering the name thus from the ancient Byzantium.

Now the author of the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" acquired his learning for such a momentous task in a peculiar way. Being a delicate child, his education was conducted at home under his aunt, Catherine Porten. When he went to Westminster School in 1749 his health precluded hard study. At Magdalen College, Oxford, he exhibited such a stock of erudition from his own private desultory reading as might have puzzled a genius, and a degree of ignorance as would have shamed a schoolboy. While at Oxford, he failed and was obliged to leave. His father then sent him to M. Pavillard, a Calvinist Minister, at Lausanne, in Switzerland, where he devoted himself to regular study. An episode, however, had an important bearing upon his future career, for during two years—from 1760 to 1762—he was a Militia Captain, and this occupation gave him not only robust health, but a knowledge of military matters which proved of immense advantage to him when he came to write his "History," and this is fully acknowledged in his "Memoirs," which he wrote thirty years afterwards. "My principal obligation to the Militia was the making me an Englishman and a soldier. After my foreign education,

with my reserved temper, I should long have continued a stranger in my native country, had I not been shaken in this various scene of new faces and new friends ; had not experience forced me to feel the characters of our leading men, the state of parties, the forms of office, the operations of our Civil and Military system. In this peaceful service I imbibed the rudiments of the language and science of tactics, which opened a new field of study and observation. I diligently read and meditated the “*Memoires Militaires*” of Quintus Icilius, the only writer who has united the merits of a professor and a veteran. The discipline and evolution of a modern battalion gave me a clearer notion of the phalanx and the legion, and the Captain of the Hampshire Grenadiers (the reader may smile) has not been useless to the historian of the Roman Empire.”

But it was at Rome, on the 15th of October, 1764, as he sat musing amid the ruins of the Capitol, while listening to the bare-footed friars as they sang their vespers in the temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the “Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire” occurred to him.

Gibbon’s criticisms of Christianity may be found in his vindication. It is sufficient to say, that after being turned out of Oxford he became a Roman

Catholic, and under the influence of the Calvinist minister, returned to the Protestant Church. We are not to be surprised that he became an assailant of the Divine Authority of Christianity.

It seems strange that there is so little of what we may term the style of an English writer in Gibbon's great work, the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," and it is difficult to explain this peculiarity of style, unless we attribute it to the influence of the training which he received on the Continent after he left Oxford, for he does not betray any nationality, and we must regard his style as European pure and simple.

Now, it is as an historian that Gibbon claims our chief attraction, and he has been classed as one of the leading historians. Even Niebuhr, the eminent Roman historian, admitting the superiority of Gibbon's great work, decided to write his own history down only to the period at which Gibbon commenced his history of the "Decline and Fall." Professor Porson, in the preface to his Letters to Archdeacon Travis, says of Gibbon : "Though his style is in general correct and elegant, he sometimes draws out the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument. In endeavouring to avoid vulgar terms he too frequently dignifies trifles, and clothes common thoughts in a splendid dress that

would be rich enough for the noblest ideas. In short, we are too often reminded of the great man Mr. Prig, the auctioneer, whose manner was so inimitably fine that he had as much to say on a ribbon as on a Raphael." But, after all that has been said and written from time to time, we cannot but admire the charm and beauty of Gibbon's style, and say with Professor Freeman: "Whatever else is read, Gibbon must be read, too."

XXIV.

GEORGE GROTE.

BORN A.D. 1794—DIED A.D. 1871.

GEORGE GROTE was one of the greatest literary ornaments of his time. He was descended from a family of German extraction, the grandson of a London banker. He was born at Beckenham, in Kent, in 1794, and was educated at the Charterhouse. After leaving school, he entered his father's counting-house at the age of sixteen. He, however, devoted his leisure hours to the study of the Classics, and became a profound Greek scholar, and when quite in his youth, made it one of the objects of his life to write a history of Greece. It was already known, in 1823, that the young banker had begun the preparations for his work, which lasted till the period of the Reform Bill, when they were interrupted for a time. The interruption was caused by the interest he took in the agitation for Parliamentary Reform, and was then still further

hindered by his election to Parliament as one of the representatives for the City of London. On his withdrawal from public life, in 1841, he again devoted himself to his labours, and in 1846 appeared the first two volumes of his celebrated "History of Greece."

In 1835—1837, Connop Thirlwall (afterwards Bishop of St. David's) had already put in print a "History of Greece," and Grote, in his preface to his "History of Greece," says he would probably never have conceived of writing a history of Greece if Thirlwall's work had appeared a few years earlier. But Grote's great work, which appeared ten years later, threw Thirlwall's work unduly in the shade, and Thirlwall himself was the first to acknowledge its superiority. Grote's "History of Greece" was speedily recognised at the Universities and elsewhere, and became the standard authority on the subject.

The remaining volumes followed in rapid succession, and the twelfth and concluding volume appeared in 1856. No sooner had Grote finished his "Magnum Opus," than he undertook to supplement one of the chapters of it, that upon Socrates, by writing an exhaustive account of post-Socratic philosophy. The first three volumes of the next work appeared in 1865, under the title of "Plato and the Other Companions of Socrates." But it

is universally admitted that Grote's "Plato" was a distinct failure. The author was engaged at the time of his death upon an elaborate treatise on Aristotle, which was afterwards published under the editorship of Professor Bain.

Grote was Vice-Chancellor of the University of London, and also a Trustee of the British Museum ; and when offered a Peerage by Mr. Gladstone, the veteran historian and philosopher declined to accept it, on the ground that he wished to spend all his time in the discharge of his duties in the office which he had undertaken.

He was a member of the French Institute, and also many Foreign Academies and learned Societies. He was also a profound student and was particularly devoted to the structure of the Constitution.

The matter relating to the Peloponnesian War, the circumstances which led to the transition from the ascending of birth to that of democracy, are enthusiastically marked. All the greatest writers, such as Niebuhr and Müller have centred their attention on this period of Grecian History, and Grote has the insight of such a subject passionately fixed in his nature. Reform was his idol, and the eagerness with which he traced reform in Grecian History could only be likened to the hunter and his quarry. The laws of Solon, important as they were

to the consolidation of the state, nay, the very essence of the constitution of the state, had for Grote less fascination than the grand struggle of the Colonies with the oppressive and tyrannical dictatorship of aristocratic Athens, had in Grote's mind always a parallel in the struggle in which he was engaged in the politics of this country.

Such a work dominated the whole of the historian's life, and in the library of the British Museum all material was at his disposal, the treasures of Grecian literature and art were all open before him; and we know from his exhaustive work how enthusiastically he worked into them; and how his whole soul was absorbed in bringing to light the growth as well as the birth of a constitution which was won by the citizens and wrested from the nobles.

The Norman Conquest of England was a complete parallel to the Dorian Conquest of Laconia. The high military powers of the invaders; the moderate use of their victory in the first instance, and the severity which they exercised afterwards; the broad distinction of race and language, which so long separated the conquerors and the conquered; and the exclusive possession of all offices of power and dignity enjoyed by the former, are all points in which domestic history is but a repetition of the story of Sparta.

The Normans, however low their origin in their own country, were all nobles as far as regarded the conquered Saxons, while the Saxons, deprived of their lands, and carefully excluded from all the high ecclesiastical dignities, were a people of the *περιοίκοι* or commons, personally free indeed, but politically slaves.

XXV.

THOMAS CARLYLE.

BORN A.D. 1795—DIED A.D. 1881.

IT is difficult to avoid romance in giving an account of Thomas Carlyle. In the midst of a grey and white village is a small white-washed, double house, made into one by an archway joining the two parts together. Inside, are three tiny rooms, and in one of these he was born on December 4th, 1795. The son of a stonemason, a somewhat savage old borderer, whom Thomas describes as “emphatic beyond all men,” having in his anger no need of oaths, for his words were like “sharp arrows that smote into the very heart;” and Thomas said, “his spirit seems to have entered me; I seem to myself only the continuation and second volume of my father.”

But if his robust qualities came from his father, Carlyle’s delicacy of insight and poetical sensibility were derived from his mother, the gentle Jenny Welsh.

The village of Ecclefechan, where Carlyle was born, was made famous by many a border fray; by the uproarious visit of Burns who came to see the Ecclefechan lass, and now much famous as being the burial place of the old stonemason and his celebrated son, who preferred to be buried by the side of his "ain folk," rather than have a resting-place in Westminster Abbey, and in the romantic country of Gretna Green, the Annandale. Who could wonder that his last thoughts should carry him from his house in Chelsea, and travel back to Ecclefechan, "the best village in all the world!" It was from here to Arran that he walked daily to school, and as he walked along the pleasant, shadowy road, carrying his school books, what day dreams must have come to him now and then—a sight of the Solway gleaming, and can we not imagine how that beautiful, winding river must have given that grave, wise boy thoughts of the river of life running to Eternity! Close by he passed Hoddan Hill, where the Carlyle family lived for awhile. When Thomas was grown up, he spent his time translating German romances, and in particular his favourite Goethe, and it was this same poet who remarked to Eckerman, that he saw in Carlyle a force so great, that he could not tell what he might produce. Although Thomas jestingly spoke of "the family

tree" as the place where one of his ancestors was hung for cattle stealing, and his immediate kindred were of peasant class, he bore a name which had been conspicuous for ages in the annals of his native province. Under the Bruces the Carlyles were landowners in Annandale. Indeed, one head of the house was brother-in-law of the Bruce, and in the fifteenth century the descendant of Margary Bruce became Lord Carlyle of Torthorwald. From the time of Mary Stuart, when Lord Carlyle was one of the leaders of the losing side, the family fortunes declined, the members of the house sinking into the ranks of the common people. It is, however, in the house in Chelsea, that we love to think of him, as being "more full of the man's heart and soul than even Ecclefechan was, for there his life work was done. He wrote in all forty books on all kinds of subjects, History, Religion, Biography, or whatever his taste led him into, and most particularly it was Carlyle who first interpreted the literature of Germany to the English people"—that magnificent storehouse of wisdom, in which he ever found a solace and satisfaction, and whence he derived so much light, a light which the conventional literature of his own country could not furnish.

His principal works are: "The French Revolu-

tion," "Heroes and Hero Worship," and "Sartor Resartus." Of the latter book one enthusiast writes : " I began to read it without much interest, then suddenly my mind seemed to wake up. It was a wonderful feeling, just as if I stood near to a man who was playing marvellous and startling music on the grandest organ ever made. And the man who played could sing, too. He sang in a voice sometimes harsh, and sometimes sweet. It seemed to me as I read the book that it was humorous, and sad, tender, and stern at the same time. And till the very end I was carried on the wave of that organ music which had in it always a thrill of the Divine. I never found any other book made me feel exactly like that, except Shakespeare."

Margaret Gordon, of Kirkcaldy, the fair "Blumie of Sartor," though obeying her aunt's injunction not to become engaged to the struggling schoolmaster, wrote to him : " Genius will make you great, may virtue render you beloved." Of his heroes, Oliver Cromwell, Frederick the Great, Boswell, Johnson, had all true justice meted out to them ; Byron and Scott he had much to say in dispraise.

We must not take all the sayings as sincere, there was always that dyspepsia which made him "the saddest of all the children of Adam," which could

wring from him the scathing stricture about physicians "that it was easier to pour your woes into the hairy ears of a jackass than into the ears of one of them," a remark that caused him more grim amusement than vexation.

Carlyle was always full of humanity : "Without love there is no knowledge." In his journal, kept in 1829, we find him writing, "He who would understand England must understand her Church, for that is half the whole matter, am I not conscious of a prejudice on that side ? Does not the very sight of a shovel hat in some degree indispose me to the wearer thereof ? Shut up my heart against his ? This must be looked into."

Carlyle's "French Revolution" has been styled a monument of pity. We can understand how the descendants of the Covenanters could enter into the feelings of a wronged people. Persecution had made them crabbed, but it had never destroyed their feeling of commiseration. It was Leigh Hunt who said, "I believe that what Mr. Carlyle loves better than his fault finding is the face of any human creature that looks suffering, and loving, and sincere, and I believe further, that if the fellow-creature were suffering only, and neither loving nor sincere, but had to come to a pass of agony in this life, which put him at the mercies of some good man

for some last help and consolation towards his grave, even at the loss of repute, and a sure amount of pain and vexation, that man, if the groan reached him in his forlornness would be Thomas Carlyle."

XXVI.

CONNOP THIRLWALL.

BORN A.D. 1797—DIED A.D. 1875.

CONNOP THIRLWALL was born at Stepney in 1797, and was one of those rare cases in which the precocious child grows up into the man of strong, clear brain, who retains his faculties unclouded and vigorous into a ripe old age. In 1809 he published, under his father's direction, a volume of essays and poems entitled “*Primitiae*.” While at Trinity College, Cambridge, he became Craven Scholar and Bell's Scholar in 1815, and Senior Chancellor's Medallist in 1818, and after obtaining a fellowship at Trinity College, was called to the Bar in 1825. In 1827, in conjunction with his friend, Archdeacon Hare, he translated Niebuhr's “*History of Rome*.” This gave him an impetus for writing himself a political history, and in 1835-1837, there appeared his “*History of Greece*,” the literary work on which his claim to the remembrance of posterity mainly rests.

This work was written after he was transferred to the benefice of Kirby Underdale, in Yorkshire. The legal training which he had undergone admirably fitted Thirlwall for the task of investigation, but he had not the natural insight, and certainly not the passionate enthusiasm of the reformer Grote, to bring to light all the gross tyrannies of the Athenian aristocracy, or the noble qualities of the Spartan populace, whose virtues and endurance finally caused them to triumph in the struggle for freedom. When Grote's work appeared, it was with delight that the scholar Thirlwall recognised the labours of the comparatively uneducated clerk in a business house. But we must note that Thirlwall's work is far more scholarly and more redolent of the real Greek spirit than Grote's. Himself unsparing in industry and imbued with a love of learning, and successful beyond his contemporaries in gaining those coveted prizes of his University, it could not be but a matter of amazement that one whose education was finished at Charterhouse should have made such a mark. But the work of Thirlwall must not be passed by in silence, simply because another work has taken its place, the mark of the legal mind is of too great a value to be lost, and the bias of one who had entered the sacred office of the ministry, though it might in some way

dominate and prejudice the judgment in dealing with the religious matters of the heathen Greece, would be able to appreciate the deeper subtleties of Aristotle.

The literature of a country which produced a Homer, a Demosthenes, Euripides, was to the scholarly mind of Thirlwall a never-failing source of delightful contemplation. And it was in these literary geniuses that his writings found their readiest subject of delineation.

Thirlwall, besides his many great classical qualifications, which absorbed so much of his mind, was yet of that indomitable industry that no pains in research would ever be spared. But we must allow that the need of material often failed him, and Grote succeeded so much better, because of the immense advantage of consulting authorities at first hand in the best library in England.

The depth and thoroughness of his knowledge of Hebrew peculiarly qualified him for taking a leading part in the revision of the Old Testament, and it was while thus engaged that his sight failed him, and paralysis occurred which compelled him to retire from his episcopal duties in the diocese of St. David's. His mortal remains were interred in Poet's Corner, Westminster Abbey in 1875, in the same grave as that in which the remains of his fellow-historian Grote had been reverently placed in 1871.

XXVII.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY.

BORN A.D. 1800—DIED A.D. 1859.

WE must qualify the statement that Macaulay's style was "smoothed with the file," and "worked by artificial means." In giving his essays to the public he made no attempt to remodel any of the parts which had appeared previously in periodicals. Even the criticism on Milton, which was written when the author was fresh from college, and which contains scarcely a paragraph such as his matured judgment approved, he allowed still to remain, overloaded with gaudy and ungraceful ornament. As a contributor to periodicals he had to write at a distance from all books and all advisers; of trusting to his memory for facts, dates, and quotations, and of sending manuscripts to the post without reading them over, and what was thus rapidly composed was as rapidly printed. He rarely had an additional day to revise the proof sheets.

XXVIII.

JOHN RICHARD GREEN.

BORN A.D. 1837—DIED A.D. 1883.

JOHN RICHARD GREEN, honorary fellow of Jesus College, Oxford, wrote a short History of the English people. There are features about this History which are commendable, especially the placing at the beginning of each subject the authorities from which his facts, or theories, or information is derived. The honoured name of Professor Stubbs, Sir Francis Palgrave, Mr. Freeman, the chronicler Hall, William of Malmesbury the Anglo-Saxon chronicler, to mention only a few, gives us an impression of a widely read and painstaking writer. But the colloquial manner in which it is written conveys the impression that he wishes to bring his subject down to the intelligence of the reader. Such expressions, as we must now pass on, and before opening our story, are not exactly the most convincing methods of impressing an earnest reader, however entertaining they might

be in the class-room ; and, as frequently they introduce statements that are startling in their novelty, it is far from a convincing way of impressing the mind. It is a style which spoils a work of very great research, and we can hardly be surprised that it is a style which has not been imitated.

The question as to whether the “ homely or colloquial ” way of writing history has failed, is open to another opinion, namely, that such historians as Green and Fletcher have done a great deal to remove their subject from uninteresting dry-as-dust atmosphere which used to surround it. Many people, especially the young, require a picturesque setting, a kind of decorated stage upon which to view the figures of the past, and the pen-picture which Green gives seems to supply this.

Green brings the History down to the Peninsular War and the Battle of Waterloo, and finishes with an epilogue which gives a very brief summary of after events, dismissing them as being “ too near to us as yet to admit of a cool and purely historical treatment.”

XXIX.

THE MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ANCIENT AND MODERN HISTORIANS.

IN order to compare the main differences between ancient and modern historians, we must start with history itself, and regard the Old Testament History as the best authenticated of all ancient writings; and, as it gives to us what was probably the prevailing traditions of the time as to the story of the Creation of the World, the Garden of Eden, the Fall and the Flood—only from the call of Abraham can we look upon its relations as history. But from that period, as the Jews were strict observers of genealogy, and prided themselves in being perfect in their generations, we may use it as a valuable standard to compare whatever contemporary histories may possess in common. When we compare the structure of the Scriptures with similar writings, of date certainly not anterior to the Holy Writings, we feel that there is something

so perfect about them, and they present such a startling contrast, that we must consider the inspiration of the writers to have been different in every way from those authors, however gifted, who have left their mark as historians or philosophers, and reflect that not until the Grecian Government had advanced into a considerable state of civilisation, say about 700 B.C., was there any knowledge of writing at all ; and then, to compare these histories of the Jews, at a period so far anterior to this, as the call of Abraham, 1921 B.C., it is nothing short of the miraculous that such books as the Pentateuch could ever have been compiled. So that, if we take the Old Testament as containing an account of the Creation, we must consider it as the most ancient of all histories. The Indian era of the Kaliyuga, 3101 B.C. ; the Chinese Cyclical era, 2700 B.C. ; the building of Babylon, 2247 B.C. ; and the foundation of the monarchy of Egypt, 2188 B.C., all come before the call of Abraham ; but all of them must be embraced within the possible scope of the history of the Holy Scripture.

With regard to antiquity it must be confessed that we are much in the dark, for until recently it was supposed that the most ancient race was the Semitic, and that Persia, and the country generally of Eastern Empires, were the birthplace of the

human race, but recent discoveries, and especially those made in excavations in the Island of Crete, and also later still, in the Ionian Islands, have brought to light evidences of a civilisation at a period in the world's history long before any that we have previously become acquainted with. Therefore, to place the date of any event in the world's age, history must always be a matter of pure conjecture, and can only be looked upon as a convenient point to decide in the matter of time, that we may have some starting date to make up a chronology; although chronology, partly because of its artificiality, is of small consequence compared with the events which have changed the history of the world and the people who have played in the principal part in those events.

Like our own country, obscurity is the night that heralds the dawn of early ages, and obscurity is only relieved at times by fable. The Grecian history, however, derives some authenticity at the earliest period from the chronicle of Paros, preserved in the Arundelian Marbles at Oxford. The authority of this chronicle has been questioned, but on a review of the whole controversy arguments to its authenticity preponderate. It fixes the dates of the most remarkable events in the history of Greece from the time of the Cecrops down to the

age of Alexander the Great, 1582-354 B.C. These Marbles were brought to England in 1629 and placed in the gardens of Arundel House, in London, where some of them were broken, and others taken away and used for ordinary building purposes ; but, in 1667, Henry Howard, Duke of Norfolk, presented the remainder to the University of Oxford.

The genius of the Greeks was ever conspicuous in the realm of history, and the most eminent of the historians were contemporary almost. Herodotus 484 B.C., Thucydides 471 B.C., and Xenophon 444 B.C. Halicarnassus gave birth to Herodotus, as it did in later ages to Dionysius, the Latin historian. Herodotus had to get his material, not merely from the dim and distant ages of mythology, but to gather his facts from his travels and put down whatever came under his observation. Of course he had to meet with traditional history, and stories of the marvellous, for what early historian could escape it ? But so much of it is verified by the discoveries that all which he has recorded that came under his own personal observation, stands out as a marvel of personal industry and research.

He has been justly styled the father of Grecian history. When we reflect that writing was probably not introduced into Greece before the eighth

century before Christ, and probably even later, and even then was only confined to the wealthy, it must be conceded as a triumph over difficulties that a work of such extent could have been executed at all. We have no parallel of such a genius in the history of other countries existing at a period so remote unless it be that of the Holy Scriptures. In our own England we have Gildas, who thwarts and disappoints just as we want enlightenment, and Bede, and later on King Alfred, and these two marvels of intelligence arising in the midst of a race that scorned learning as unmanly, have handed down to us much that we are guided by in our estimate of Early Saxon history.

Fortunately, Cæsar and Tacitus have supplied us with meagre details, and so it can be pieced together in a measure, but somewhat in the nature of patchwork. We must look to the spade and to the pen to tell us of what we were. Later on, when monasteries were built through the instrumentality of Dunstan and Theodore, chroniclers were enabled to give us something to eke out our meagre annals, but it was not until the time of Henry II. that the birth of English literature actually took place. The Scriptoriums were built, and writers, such as William of Malmesbury, Benedict of Peterborough, William of Newborough, Gervase of Tilbury, Hugh of

Lincoln, Giraldus Cambrensis, and a host of others brought about a full stream that had previously only appeared in scanty rivulets.

So it was in Greece, after Herodotus appeared Thucydides, fired by emulation that had been kindled by the recital of those wonderful books that the populace so enthusiastically hailed, and christened with the names of their Muses.

As we might expect, the style of Thucydides changed and improved, for it is written in more classic dialect ; it is elaborated ; every sentence has been polished ; the style is no longer the full and flowing period of Herodotus, but a sententious brevity at once lively and energetic, and is a model of the perfection of Greek prose. Then emerges altogether a fresh light and a fresh style ; there is simplicity about it that we welcome, and an energetic way of description and biography that places us in a charming atmosphere of realisation of the countries through which the *Anabasis* made its way.

Greece, in her decline, produced historians of great eminence. Polybius wrote forty books of the Roman and Greek history during his own age, that is, from the beginning of the second Punic War to the reduction of Macedonia into a Roman province ; but of the great work only five remain entire, and valuable fragments of the remaining

books. He merits the praise of eloquence and purity less than the more important virtues of authentic information and most judicious reflection of the high estimation in which Polybius stood with the authors of antiquity. We have sufficient proof in the encomiums bestowed on him by Cicero, Strabo, and Plutarch, and in the use Livy has made of his history in adopting his narratives in many parts of his work by an almost literal translation.

It is a blot on the memory of a great writer like Livy that he not only did this without acknowledging his authority, but stigmatized the history of Polybius as worthless. Pirating is inevitable in a writer of history, and it is only right and proper to mention the fact, but in this case the piracy was carried to such an extent that whole books were practically copied—that annexation may be used as the fitter word, and we all know that annexation is in politics looked upon as a mere detail in the administration of an Empire. A poor man may not steal, but a powerful ruler may annex.

Polybius is perhaps the only historian among the Greeks who was experimentally and professionally acquainted with the military operations, and the political measures of which he makes mention.

He has been recommended in every age and

country as the best master in the art of war, and nothing can more effectually prove the esteem in which he was held among the Romans than to mention that Brutus, the murderer of Cæsar, perused his history with the greatest attention, epitomized it, and often retired from the field where he had drawn the sword against Octavius and Antony to read the instructive pages which described the greatest actions of his ancestors.

Before the intercourse with Greece, which took place after the Punic Wars, the Roman people were utterly illiterate. The "Fescennini versus" mentioned by Livy, were verses sung by the labourers in a strain of coarse merriment and raillery.

Varro is one of the earliest writers, and composed no less than 490 books, but all are lost except "De Re Rustica" and "De Lingua Latina." St. Augustine wonders how Varro, who read such a number of books, could find time to compose so many volumes, and how he who wrote so many volumes could be at leisure to peruse such a variety of books.

Next to Varro in order of time comes Sallust. This writer introduced an important improvement on history as treated by the Greek historians, by applying (as Dionysius of Halicarnassus says) the

science of philosophy to the study of facts. Sallust is, therefore, to be considered as the father of philosophic history, a species of writing which has been so successfully cultivated in modern times.

He is an admirable writer for the matter of his compositions, which evince great judgment and knowledge of human nature, but by no means to be commended for his style and manner of writing. He affects singularity of expression, an antiquated phraseology, and a petulant levity and sententiousness, which has nothing of the dignity of the historical style. He was an aristocrat, intolerant, luxurious, and extravagant.

Cæsar has much more purity of style than Sallust, and more correctness of expression, but his Commentaries want that amplitude of diction and fulness of illustration which is essential to history, and so must be considered in the nature of annals ; but as such they have never been excelled, and they were written on the spot where he fought his battles.

In his public character he must be reckoned one of the few heroes that make their appearance among mankind. His qualities were such that in every battle he could but be the conqueror, and in every republic, master.

During the intervals of peace he enriched and

beautified the capital of his country with public buildings and libraries. He reformed the calendar, and left his immense fortune to the inhabitants of Rome. Before his death he was renowned for his benevolence.

In all the requisites of an historian Livy stands unrivalled among the Romans, possessing consummate judgment in his selection of facts, perspicuity of management and arrangement, sagacious reflection, sound views of policy, with the most copious, pure and eloquent expression. It has been objected that his speeches derogates from the truth of history, but this was a prevalent taste with the ancient writers ; and as these speeches are always known to be the composition of the historian, the reader is not deceived as to the style of Livy, though in general excellent, we sometimes perceive in it, and most commonly in the speeches, an affectation of the pointed sentences and obscurity of the declaimers, which evinces the pernicious influence acquired by the teachers at Rome since the time of Cicero and Sallust. His statement that rocks were melted by the action of fire and vinegar in crossing the Alps, has only just recently received ample corroboration, for in cutting rocks in Canada this same process is in vogue.

In the decline of Roman literature Tacitus is an

historian of no common merit. He successfully cultivated the method pointed out by Sallust, of applying philosophy to history, and in this he displays great knowledge of human nature, and penetrates with singular acuteness into the secret springs of policy and the motives of actions. But his fault is, that he is too much of a politician, drawing his characters after the model of his own mind, ever assigning actions and events to pre-conceived schemes and designs, and allowing too little to the operation of accidental causes, which often have the greatest influence on human affairs. Tacitus in his style professedly imitated that of Sallust, adopting all the ancient phraseology, as the new idioms, introduced into the Roman language by that writer. To his brevity and abruptness he added most of the faults of the declining school. His expression, therefore, though extremely forcible, is often enigmatically obscure, the very worst property that style can possess. Roman literature after this period consists wholly of philosophy, physics, and poetry. The "Natural History" of Pliny is the most valuable storehouse of the knowledge of the ancients in physics, economics, and the arts and sciences. In poetry, Rome produced many eminent writers—Lucretius, Catullus, Virgil, Horace, and Ovid—and it may be

safely asserted that these poets, in their several departments, are never equalled in any of the succeeding ages of the Empire.

We must now make some remark on the progress of literature in Europe. The first restorers of learning in Europe were the Arabians, who in the course of their Asiatic conquests became acquainted with some of the ancient Greek authors, discovered and justly appreciated the knowledge and judgment and improvement to be derived from them. The Caliphs procured from the Eastern emperors copies of the ancient manuscripts, and had them carefully translated into Arabic, esteeming principally those which treated of Mathematics, Physics, and Metaphysics. They disseminated their knowledge in the course of their conquests, and founded schools and colleges in all the countries they subdued.

The western kingdoms of Europe became first acquainted with the learning of the ancients through the medium of these Arabian translations.

Alfred the Great introduced a taste for literature in England, but learning was kept alive in the monasteries where the monks were employed transcribing a few of the ancient authors.

A taste for classical literature in the fifteenth century led to the discovery of many ancient authors. Poggio discovered the writings of Quin-

tilian and several of the compositions of Cicero, which stimulated a further research, and the recovery of many valuable remains of Greek and Roman literature resulted. But this taste was not generally diffused. England and France were extremely barbarous. The library at Oxford contained only six hundred volumes, and there were but four Classics in the Royal Library at Paris. But a brighter period was approaching. The dispersion of the Greeks on the fall of the Eastern Empire, in the end of the fifteenth century, diffused a taste for polite literature over the West of Europe. A succession of Popes, endowed with a liberal and enlightened spirit, gave every encouragement to learning and the Sciences. And, above all, the noble discovery of the art of printing, about 1474, contributed to their rapid advancement. This discovery of printing was the revolution in everything. Oxford and Cambridge woke up to the new learning, the Reformation quickened life in every country in Europe. But not till the reign of Queen Elizabeth did the full burst of expression take place of the talent so long pent up ; and, then indeed, we may say that England shone with a brilliancy that has never dimmed. Writers in plenty are to be found, and the present age is prolific, if not conspicuous for genius.

In comparing the ancient historians with the modern we have several things to consider. The circumstances under which the historians wrote their accounts.

The Greek and Roman historians were soldiers and participated in the events they related, with, of course, some exceptions. Modern historians are not so distinguished for their exploits, their work being to investigate, inasmuch as the matter they have to deal with is totally different. The political constitution, the status and improvement of the people in education, the advance of nations by commerce, are subjects which relate to the well-being of nations. War ought to be looked upon as a part of barbarous ages. Education, invention, improvements of every kind, are what modern legislators aim at producing ; and, consequently, the modern historian finds his mind occupied in those peaceful changes that mark new epochs, rather than those martial shocks which leave so little behind them in the shape of permanent blessings.

If we compare the Saxon Chronicle of our own country with writers such as Macaulay, what was there to write about but oppression and devastation.

In Roman and Grecian history this state of things

was more manifest, and the great Epic of Herodotus was only to lead up to the battles of Marathon, Platæa, and Salamis. Thucydides dealing with the Peloponnesian war, Xenophon with the wars of Cyrus. If there were men of peaceful pursuits such as the philosophers, Sophocles, Plato, and Aristotle, it was only a lull in the storm ; and, even they lived in a state of political faction, perilously near to Civil War.

Roman writers were the same. Livy's greatest exploit was to record the Punic War. Cæsar to be his own biographer of the marvellous exploits in arms that extended the Empire of Rome to almost incredible boundaries. These were the successes the ancient historian had to relate. The modern historian examines those successes, then he has to trace the consequences of them, and it is more in the decline and fall that his mind is occupied, and the philosophical lessons to be deduced from them. And what a picture of the failure of human effort when exercised in military exploits does this panorama afford ! Where is the Assyrian, the Pelasgian, the Roman, and the Grecian ascendancy ? Take the history of the ancient Briton, the savagery of the Saxons as they raided every town and part of the country accessible to their boats ; they, in their turn, had to bend the neck to the

insolent overlordship of the Norman. But these are but the meandering in the river of years.

Consolidation of Empire is the text which the modern historian looks for, and the pacific means of obtaining that end is the aim of the modern writer ; and examination into the genius and national spirit of a race ; their systems of education, their laws, their literary characters, their public and private manners, the policy of their rulers. What he has to aim at is to relate the causes which exalt and edify, and to lay before his readers the philosophical deduction, the lesson of warning, and to try and bring home as a true patriot those failures and the cause of those failures, to the people of his own times. He must be a prophet lifting up his voice in no uncertain tones. He must proclaim from the housetop his censures on those follies which he sees corrupting his country, and to show from parallels how deadly those debasements of morals, those corruptions of life are to the age he is living in.

In the delineation of modern history, the leading objects of attention are not those which arrested the ancient biographer. He looks back indeed with pity and regret to the time of the Visigoths, the Franks and Huns, when the whole face of Europe was being swept with a devastation that only senseless savagery could produce. But he sees

in it the hand of an Almighty power altering the manner of man, correcting and chastising the corruptions and vices of man, as it were, with earthquake and fire, and teaching us all that there is a limit to licentiousness, oppression, and wrong.

Had these nations gone on in the Spartan simplicity and nobleness of life as they had emerged from obscurity ; had they not allowed themselves to be sunk into worse than heathen decadence, they would still have dominated the world, and held their places as the first of nations.

The danger of the modern historians is partisanship, and the review of their writings has shown how difficult it is for them not to be moved by bias, and to be fair in their estimate of the issues of the past. To make the past present, to bring the distant near, and to do this in a pleasant, flowing narrative, like Green does in his short history of England, is entertaining no doubt, but it is the province of a novelist, not an historian. On the other hand, to extract philosophy from history as Hume and Smollett have done, is to run into another danger and to produce, not the philosophy of the past, but the past tinged with the sceptic turn of their minds. When we turn for the real historian, we go to a man like Niebuhr or Bishop Stubbs. These have been and ever will be quoted as patient students

and true interpreters of constitutional history. Macaulay, though he girds himself in biting sarcasm against false teachers, yet can let himself go, so to speak, when treating of subjects like Charles I., Laud, and Cromwell, in the spirit of a partisan. We have Sir Walter Scott for the romance, and Henry Hallam for a history, critical and argumentative. Both are occupied on the same matter, but one works on the outward form and the picturesque, and the other is an anatomist ; he goes into the inmost recess and lays bare the springs of motion and the causes of decay.

Dr. Arnold is one of our oft-quoted and, therefore, most trusted historians. He had great gifts for the work, great industry, and great acuteness. His knowledge was extensive, various, and profound ; he had the delicacy of touch, and his speculations were strikingly practical. In this respect we can trust him in all sincerity. Gibbon had a very unpleasant way of telling a story by implication and allusion. This is a blemish indeed, for it raises in the mind that which is always evil and suspicious. But Gibbon soars above the general pettiness of many writers ; he occupies most justly a high place in the estimation of those most capable of forming a judgment. We may feel hurt by many of his views and fall out with him on vital points, but we

can read his history and be carried away by the philosophical profundity of his conclusions.

Lingard is, perhaps, better known and more widely read than any other modern historian. Born of humble parents on the 5th of February, 1771, at Winchester, he soon displayed unusual excellence and piety, and was sent by the Catholic Bishop Talbot to the English College at Douay. Owing to the disorders of the times in France, the community had to remove, and Lingard, after many perils, arrived in England, and in 1808, having purchased a small estate, the migrants or refugees built a commodius house. From an early period Lingard had been accustomed to dwell on the antiquities of his country. Perhaps his residence in a country where Jarrow and Wearmouth still recalled the memory of Bede, and where Lindisfarne and Hexham and Tynemouth were yet eloquent of the past, contributed to the bent of his genius.

For the amusement of his companions, and in moments snatched from his various duties, he embodied his thoughts in a series of detached papers. These papers were read by him to his friends at the evening fireside. The extent of the reading and the depth of research struck his friends at once with surprise and admiration. Urged on

by the importunity of his friends, he put in the press at Newcastle, "The Antiquities of the Anglo-Saxon Church," in 1806. His energies were now directed to the great work before him, and in an incredibly short period he was enabled to complete the "History of England from the Invasion of the Romans to the year 1688." Lingard's style has been commented on, and was at the time. His answer was this: "I am much more dissatisfied with the style than others can be: but style is become to me a secondary object. The task I have imposed on myself of taking nothing on credit, but of going to the original author, is so laborious that I have no time to throw away on the graces of style. Of this you will be convinced when I tell you that in March, 1818, when I made agreement with Mawman, I had written only to the end of Edward II. I agreed to go to press in October following, so that, in the course of seven months, I had to look over all that I had written, to make numerous additions and compose lives of the succeeding Monarchs to the end of Henry VII. This I did so as not to stop the press one hour; but it was great labour, greater than I ever underwent in my life; nor would I have done it had I not found that unless I fixed a time I should never get through. Hence I attended little to style, and hence I am con-

vinced there must be omissions and occasional inaccuracies."

Here we are let behind the scenes and we form a conception of what a stupendous task is surmounted by an honest writer.

A very different task is this to the modern compiler, who has all the codices at his disposal, all the authorities tabulated, all the books that ever were written on the subject, to be brought before him at the summons of the librarian ; and then, the facilities of the present day—the typewriter, the shorthand—these help to speed the work as never was possible in Lingard's time. History up to his time, had in a great measure to be taken on trust, fiction had almost acquired the substance of reality. Writer after writer followed in the same track. To remove these impediments, to overthrow the vast fabric which falsehood had erected and prejudice had continued to uphold, was the important enterprise in which, with a full knowledge of its difficulties, and a firm resolution to meet them with truth, with candour, and with impartiality, Lingard was about to embark.

In a letter to Mr. Kirk, he thus explains his views and feelings on the subjects :—

" Through the work I made it a rule to tell the truth, whether it made for or against us : to avoid

all appearance of controversy that I might not repel Protestant readers, and yet to furnish every necessary proof in our favour, so that, if you compare my narrative with Hume's for example, you will find that with the aid of notes, it is a complete refutation of him without appearing to be so. In my account of the Reformation, I must say much to shock Protestant prejudices, and my only chance to be read by Protestants depends upon my having a reputation of a temperate writer. The good to be done is to write a book which Protestants will read."

Of the wisdom of these sentiments it would be impossible to doubt. Until the appearance of his "History," the Protestant mind was inaccessible to argument. His history was one of the great causes which have wrought such a change in public sentiment in England on Catholic matters. In Germany, in the Universities abroad and at home, Lingard's history was accepted as a standard such as no historian of modern times has ever attained. One turns from a history of such merit with reluctance, and it is as one who has gained, as it were, the summits of the highest peak in the Alps, that we come down to consider the works of meaner minds and feebler ability. Green's History, for instance, romancing at such a rate that he involves in bewil-

dering confusion the changes of actors, making the leap as it were on the stage, and saying their petty pieces as though time were pressing, and they had to make haste and get it over.

Another work of stupendous research is that of Rapin de Thoyras, a French historian, who was born at Castres in 1661. He belonged to the noble family of Peter de Rapin, Baron of Manvers, a soldier who accompanied Henry IV.

A story illustrating the poverty of the monarch runs, that when Baron Rapin lost his horse and begged Henry to give him the wherewithal to buy another, "I would," said the King, "with all my heart, but see, I have not a shirt to my back." This family, from whence sprang many illustrious persons, was originally English. They were of the reformed faith, and did not escape the persecution which befel the Huguenots. Rapin's history was written originally in French and for French readers, but a translation into English was made by Tindal, Vicar of Great Waltham. When Rapin began his work he little thought of writing a complete history of England. His long stay in our island gave him an opportunity of learning our language, and his post in the army during the War in Ireland, even obliging him to it, he diligently applied himself to the reading of English books and particularly of

such as treated of the government and history of England after the Norman Conquest.

This led him on to study the history of the Anglo-Saxons, but he found this history so confused that he set about the task of clearing up this part of English history by removing the useless matter and carrying the thread so as to give, at least, a general knowledge. So beginning from the first attempt of Julius Cæsar, he intended to conclude with the Norman Conquest; then, finding the scene had changed, and that from a wild forest he was entering a cultivated country where the way was easy, he decided to proceed. However, when he came to the reign of Henry II. he was on the point of relinquishing his task, of which the beginning had been so discouraging, when he came across Rymer's "Foedera." This was of infinite service to Rapin in compiling his history.

Rymer's collection contained treaties of peace, truce, league, marriages, commerce made by kings of England with other princes, ambassadors' instructions, their letters and information, as well as concerning their own negotiations, as the affairs of the courts to which they were sent, very instructive memoirs upon affairs confusedly spoken of by historians, letters patents, orders, safe conducts, with numberless other papers which cannot be

ranged under general heads, and which are of great use to an historian.

This collection was published at the Government's expense, and Lord Halifax, a great promoter of that work, sent these volumes to the famous Le Clerc, who brought them to the notice of Rapin. This gave Rapin an advantage over all historians, and enabled him to rectify error in the best English, Scotch, French, Italian, and Spanish historians. This also removed the objection of his being a foreigner, which naturally arises in the mind of an Englishman. But, it is further considered that besides this advantage, he not only carefully perused all the English historians, but also confronted them with those of the neighbouring states, whether they wrote in Latin, French, Italian, or Spanish.

As a foreigner, he had the privilege of speaking the truth without fear of offending any party. He had no motive or interest to induce him to be partial to England, or any of the neighbouring states. His life was equally spent in France, England, Holland, and Germany during the seventeen years he was employed in this work. He had no post or position which might bias him to one nation or another, and as he had no particular obligations to any of the fore-named states, so he

had no reason to complain of ever receiving the least injustice.

Rapin was a layman, and considering the few lay historians in olden times, that is much to be valued.

Another writer of vast authority, the author of the "Constitutional History of England," namely, Professor Stubbs, afterwards Bishop Stubbs. We may speak of him as the greatest authority of our times on Constitutional history. Always exact, never making mistakes, never giving heed to doubtful authority, there is no writer at any time who has won more qualified respect. To quote Stubbs is to say the last word. There was no part of our history from the earliest times that was not thoroughly investigated by this great historian, and we tread on firm ground, where before there was only shifting sand of romance and tradition. Documents, illustrative of English history, contain all that bears directly on our Constitution.

The Norman Constitution is best studied in the "Constitutional History and Select Charters" of Stubbs. Where can we read a more admirable exposition of Henry II.'s administration? A period in our history, marking the dawn of a new era, the Constitution of Clarendon, or rather the Concordat between Church and State presented by Henry to

the Council of Clarendon, by which the legislation respecting ecclesiastical jurisdiction was wholly new. Legal reforms of all kinds, the restoration of the Circuit of Judges, the Assize of Arms—these were only parts of Henry's legislation. His reign initiated “the rule of law.” It was in these Assizes that new Codes were issued with the sanction of the barons, and prelates he summoned every year. The fabric of our provincial legislation commences with the Assize of Clarendon, and it is to Stubbs, as well as Hallam, that we owe an exhaustive study of the consequences of the legislation of these times. Stubbs' “Constitutional History of England” and “Documents Illustrative of English History” contain all that bears on early Saxon times, and in his “Constitutional History and Select Charters” we have a profound study of the Norman Constitution.

As we have given three great authors as representing the Catholic, the Protestant, and the Episcopalian view of English History, so Hallam will represent to us more the philosophical view of the same subject. We will use Macaulay's words in his famous essay on Hallam's “Constitutional History.” “The language, even where most faulty, is weighty and massive, and indicates strong sense in every line. It often rises to eloquence, not florid

or impassioned, but high, grave, and sober, such as would become a State paper delivered by a great magistrate, a Somers or a D'Agnesseau. In this respect Mr. Hallam's mind corresponds strikingly with that of his style. His work is eminently judicial. Its whole spirit is that of the bench, not that of the bar. He sums up with a calm, steady impartiality, turning neither to the right or left, glossing over nothing, exaggerating nothing, and he advocates on both sides, who are alternately biting their lips to hear their conflicting misstatements and sophisms exposed. On a general survey, we do not scruple to pronounce the 'Constitutional History' the most impartial book we ever read."

Those who know of Macaulay's inveterate habit of cavilling on every subject he investigates, will set a particular value on these words.

We now come to Macaulay, a warm partisan of Whig principles, which colour all his writings and influence his estimate of the men and the deeds of the past. The work by which he is best known is his "History of England." Blending in his narrative, traits, pictures, allusions, biographical sketches, and even classical quotations, he troubled himself little, as he said in his preface, about what is called the dignity of history, so long as he succeeded in conveying to his readers an exact know-

ledge of the public and private life of their ancestors. Nor did he pretend to absolute impartiality. He could not but profess for the heroes of liberty, for the patriots who had bled and suffered that England's freedom might be established on a firm basis, that earnest admiration which he felt, and whose achievements he lauded as warmly as he denounced the tyranny and bigotry of their oppressors. His History, therefore, has not escaped the attack of political critics, and Tory writers have laboured to impugn many of his conclusions.

His History only goes down to the Treaty of Ryswick, but is carried on in the most admirable manner by Lord Stanhope, and this book, perhaps, more than compensates for the regret that Lord Macaulay's health made him stop in his labours when he did. His last years were harassed by distressing symptoms of pulmonary disease, and his end came suddenly and unexpectedly on the 28th of December, 1859, his remains being deposited at the foot of Addison's statue in Poet's Corner, Westminster Abbey.

Lord Morley, who was born in 1838, is a figure that dominates the stage of the present time. A statesman of the old school of Liberals, and who stands before the public at the present day in honour and dignity. Respected and admired by

all parties, and in his bold stand in Indian politics, justly honoured for his statesmanship.

His "History of the United Netherlands" is justly esteemed as portraying that struggle against the overbearing spirit of Spain, the ultimate triumph of the Protestant struggle against a bigoted prince who thought to repress these new opinions by means of torture and cruelty. The Duke of Alva was sent to enforce submission, and the inhuman barbarities of that leader alienated whatever respect they ever had for the Spanish rule. Eighteen thousand persons perished by the hands of the executioner in the course of Alva's government, which was of five years' duration. The Prince of Orange organised a force to expel this race of monstrous barbarity, and Spain's authority was crushed. It is a period of intense historical interest, and many a thrilling episode is told by Morley, and the eventual establishment of a Republic out of a chaos of opposing elements is very interesting reading. Lord Morley has written an admirable life of Burke and a history of English writers from the Conquest to Chaucer.

John Richard Green, who was born in 1837, has done a great work from an educational point of view, for he has given us a short "History of England" which is most admirable in every way;

and he followed this up by a larger work of four volumes.

The value of the earlier work has been fully acknowledged, and the wide use of it in schools has been the test of its educational value. Of all the host of elementary histories, Green's is to be preferred, for the easy way he has of writing in simple language and short sentences, and the pleasing manner of setting out his work in narrative form which is attractive. It is not written in any part, like most of the books on similar subjects, with that dulness that used to repel and exasperate, and the matter is abundant.

Some parts are of superior excellence, for instance, the reigns of Henry II. and Elizabeth, the latter especially so, full justice being done to the Queen's remarkable ability, and the quickened life of the age, the wonderful advance in commerce, the improvement in every department of life, the increased comfort, the elegance of architecture, and above all, the growth of learning and the wonderful burst of literary genius in such giants as Lord Bacon, Shakespeare, Spencer, Marlowe, and Greene. The love of the drama is set forth in all its plenitude and is admirably done. It is impossible to take the book up for a short reading and not to open a page at any part without being fascinated, and a better

way of beguiling an idle moment for the sake of relaxation would be hard to find. It is satisfying as well as instructive and amusing—a food for thought. The details are, nevertheless, too crowded, and the author, in his anxiety to give animation to the scenes, brings forward too many characters, and thus, in a way, spoils it for accurate assimilation. It is as if we had passed a wood in the train ; we have an idea that there were trees, but we could not distinguish any individually, but at least we ought to be able to notice one bigger than the others.

Froude has given us the whole story of the early Protestants, admirably wrought up in the History of England ; but in his narrative of Cromwell's rebellion, he has disfigured a work of great literary merit by his love of paradox, his hero worship, and by a reckless defence of tyranny and crime, so that, in some parts it possesses little or no historical value.

Guizot's Republic, about this period, is worth much, as it brings before us the effect this rising had on foreign powers.

The rest of modern historians are so numerous that it is impossible in a short space to notice them. Burton's "History of our Times," his "History of Scotland," and other works, are all good and

dependable. Carlyle's life and letters give us an insight of much interest in Scottish history, and, of course, the Commonwealth, where he does more than whitewash the Protector, as he raises him to an eminence that savours of the enthusiast.

Sir Francis Palgrave has written voluminously on the history of the Commonwealth, and has dealt with English history even from the earliest times, and his work will always remain as a work of reference, but to be used with care.

Meanwhile the sources of early English history are so scanty, that voluminous as the writers may be, they can only exercise themselves on those periods of debatable ground such as the Reformation and the Commonwealth, where each party can take sides, and hence, a study of many of them are too much given to partisanship to be edifying. They cease to be histories when they descend to the level of debate.

The historian must be a preacher ; great advantages are given him ; he has a noble pulpit and a vast congregation. And his writings are to be permanent if they be worthy. Ages yet to come will read their lessons from his works ; he is one standing at the parting of the ways, the past and the future.

THE END.

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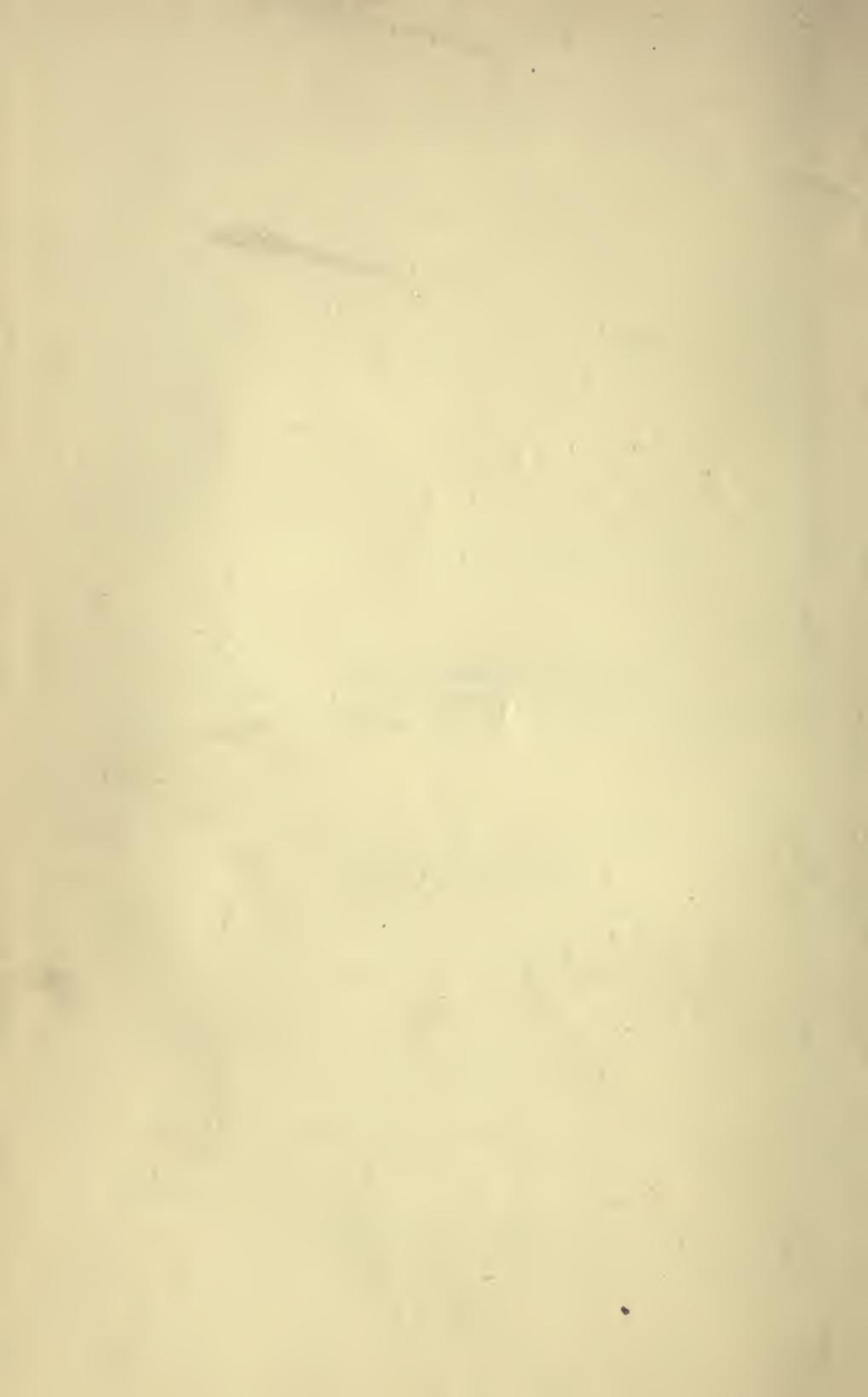
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